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Newsletter from Kim Westerskov

Email: kimworkshops@gmail.com

Web: www.kimwesterskov.com

20 Greerton Road, Tauranga 3112, New Zealand

Phone 07-578-5138

Newsletter #71 – November 2018

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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. CHRISTMAS, HOLIDAYS & PHOTOGRAPHY

So ... yet again Christmas and the summer holidays thunder towards us at worrying speed. So much to do and think about. Yes, keep the camera handy, but for most of us there's not enough spare time for serious photography, let alone learning new stuff. Which is why I don't run any workshops in December or January. However, I know that some of you are putting aside time over the next few months to advance your photography seriously, and I'm looking forward to helping those photographers do exactly that.



This is the last newsletter for 2018 – I'll see you again in late January. By then I'll have put together the workshop programme for 2019. So this is a good time to ask you – if there's any topic you'd like to see covered in my 2019 workshops, please let me know [there's no obligation at all]. I'm always interested in whatever interests – or worries – you. And what might make a good new workshop.



I know some of you will have photographic questions over the next few months. That wide-angle lens you're still thinking of buying. How to take your photography to the next level, especially now that you've brought that new lens. How to get "Honours" at your next camera club meeting. How to take better photos of the kids. Whatever. If you have a question, get in touch. Ask me. As always, there's no charge for questions answered by phone or email.

So, I hope December, Christmas, New Year and the holidays all go well for you. Whatever you may hear or see on "The News", it's a wonderful country and world we live in. I'm sure you already know that, but it's good to reflect on it every now and then.

All the very best ☺

2. KNOBS, DIALS & MENUS - or "SEEING PHOTOS"

Learning what all those knobs, dials and menus on your camera can do is the simple bit. Not necessarily easy or even fun, but simple. It may take a while, but it's a straightforward process, a matter of "just doing it". And there's many good ways of learning: tutorials found by Professor Google [there's usually many tutorials on every model of camera]. Or being taught by a knowledgeable friend, or someone at your photo club, or a professional photography teacher. Even reading the camera manual, tedious though that can be.

You don't need to know everything your camera can do [any more than you need to know everything your computer can do]. All you need to know is the bits that will be useful to you. A few artistically-gifted people achieve great results even on "Auto" just because they have such a good eye - and imagination. Imagine

how much better their results would be if these naturally-gifted photo artists got to know their camera better.

So - the knobs, dials, and menus on your camera are one thing, but “seeing photos” is another. A completely different kettle of fish. Is “seeing photos” important? Yep. Very important. Is “seeing photos” easy to learn? Nope, not really, I’m afraid. It can be learned, but not before dinner tonight or sandwiched in between dropping off the kids at school and that café meeting.

“Seeing photos” is much harder to learn than the technical bits, or to teach for that matter. Let’s imagine we’re part of a group of 25 photographers attending a workshop. As part of the workshop, we head off somewhere, anywhere really - it can be a place with good photographic potential [somewhere scenic] or somewhere with no obvious photo potential, such as a supermarket carpark. The workshop tutor tells us “Right, you’re here for two hours. Without moving more than 100 metres in any direction, see what photos you can find, and we’ll look at the results back in the workshop studio”.

Two hours later we head back to the workshop studio. A few of the photographers have had a productive two hours and a diverse and interesting portfolio to show us. Many of their photos are “good”. A couple are even “great”. At the other end of the scale, there’s



some photographers grumbling “What a waste of time that was - no photos worth taking there - I’m not coming to one of these workshops again!!!” grumble, grumble 😞. And most of the 25 will be somewhere in between. Same place, same light, same time, same opportunities. The difference? “Seeing” photographic possibilities.

One very good way of getting better at “seeing photos” is tapping into the creativity of other photographers and seeing what they’ve seen. These can be photographers you know [at your club, or the person next to you at a workshop [“Can I see what photos you’re getting?”] or people you’ve never met. If you’re interested in bird photography, buy [or borrow] photographic books from top bird photographers, or Google “great bird photos” or similar online. If you’re going to Paris and have always wanted to photograph the Eiffel Tower, Google “Eiffel Tower photos” before you go. I Googled “Eiffel Tower photos” for a recent workshop, and was surprised at the diversity of imagery I found. For the workshop, I saved over 100 Eiffel Tower photos, each one good or very good, and each one quite different from the others [different angle, different light, different mood, different foreground, different weather, different post-processing]. I could easily have saved 300 Eiffel Tower photos, each one quite different from the other 299, but 100 was enough to demonstrate the point.

Then, if I was indeed heading off to Paris with my camera soon, I would now have in my mind many dozens of ways of “seeing” the Eiffel Tower. Many more than if I hadn’t tapped into the creativity of the many other photographers who’d already put some effort into photographing the Eiffel Tower.

3. NZ GEOGRAPHIC PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR 2018 - DEREK MORRISON



This year the “New Zealand Geographic Photographer of the Year” competition celebrated its 10th birthday. Each year it’s bigger and brighter and for quite a few years now has clearly been New Zealand’s biggest, richest [in terms of prizes] and most prestigious competition. For four of those ten years, I was honoured to be one of the four judges who looked through, discussed and argued over the thousands of entries. “

Some years ago [I forget exactly how many] I met Dunedin photographer Derek Morrison and have been mentoring him ever since. We have many things in common [a love of photography and life and family, of surfing and waves and the sea, and a love of Dunedin for starters], so it’s been more pleasure than work really, but don’t tell Derek that.



Derek is a talented hard-working professional photographer based in Dunedin. www.derekmorrison.co.nz
Every Tuesday morning, without fail, his weekly newsletter arrives in my Inbox and the Inboxes of 7,000 of other subscribers. www.boxoflight.com

The awards ceremony for the 2018 New Zealand Geographic Photographer of the Year competition was held at the Q Theatre in Auckland on October 25th. The following day I got a call from a very excited Derek, bubbling and fizzing with good news. Not only had he won the Wildlife section but also the People's Choice section. "It



doesn't get much better than that, Derek" I enthused. "It does get better!" he counter-enthused "I still can't believe it, but I won the overall prize too, the title of 2018 New Zealand Geographic Photographer of the Year." "Wonderful, that's great, really amazing!" I countered, stating the somewhat obvious. We talked for quite a while, well, Derek did most of the talking, including profusely thanking me for the mentoring. The accompanying four photos are from Derek's winning portfolio.

So in this newsletter, the last of 2018, let's both celebrate Derek's achievement and also look at the concept of mentoring. Teaching is one thing, and we all understand what teaching means. Mentoring is different. I define it as "the ongoing process of inspiring, advising, guiding, teaching, critiquing ... whatever is needed for the ongoing development of a photographer. It's one-on-one, so it's different for each person". For this newsletter, I asked Derek a few questions. Read on [if you wish].

4. MENTORING - DEREK MORRISON

Derek, could you briefly describe the mentoring and why you asked for it?

I was stuck in a rut and getting frustrated by not being able to see my way out of it. I knew I wanted to take my photography to a deeper level, but kept finding myself in the safety net of what worked and commercially this was a safe area to play. But it wasn't satisfying me. I met Kim by chance and had seen his work growing up and liked the way he thought about the creative process, backed up by his incredible success as a professional photographer. So I went outside my comfort zone and asked for his help.

How was it?

I wanted a raw and unfiltered appraisal of where I was at and where I wanted to go. I got that with Kim. At times it was challenging and confronting. I was learning a lot about myself and paying someone to show me ways to improve. At times it felt like I was paying to have my ego crushed. And in some ways that was part of the message for me – to look more objectively at my work and step back, remove myself from the picture and see it through the eyes of people without the experience I had leading up to making the image. There was real value in that and it precipitated evolution in my work.

What kinds of things have you learned? The most useful ones.

There are many, many little things that I have learned from every conversation and meeting – like layers of experience I have gleaned from Kim, but my top three would be:

- Show the feeling of the moment – leave out the bits that don't matter and focus in on the feeling and capture that.
- Don't get hung up on the technical perfection – I used to love images that were technically 100% bang on. Sharp, nothing extraneous in the frame etc. But Kim taught me that having a feeling in an image outweighs having it pin sharp or perfectly lit from front to back.
- Photography is a creative journey that lasts a lifetime and only by challenging your way of thinking and your own creative process can you speed up the learning curve. I do that by regularly visiting galleries wherever I travel and looking at what the great artists of our time are doing. I get ideas from them and other photographers and weave those techniques and ideas into my own creative process.



Was there any connection between the mentoring and your NZ Geographic Photographer of the Year win?

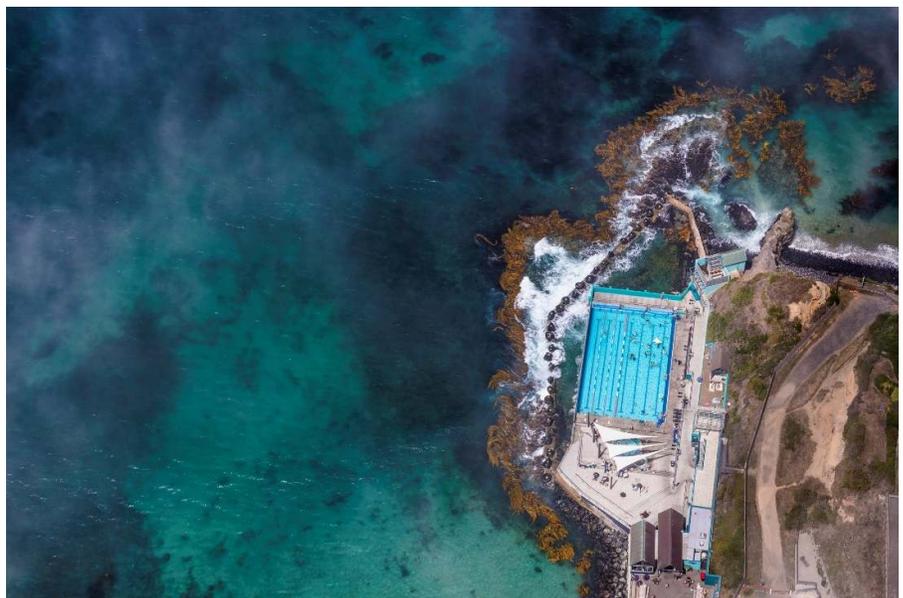
Of course. My goal has always been to be a successful wildlife photographer and it's no surprise to learn that Kim's wildlife photography is regarded as the best in the world. His mentoring has often been around my surf and commercial work (which keeps my family fed), but all those principles apply to wildlife photography and when Vega, the three-year-old sea lion appeared in the waves at St Kilda Beach that evening, I instinctively went into action. I had researched sea lions, as Kim instructed, and knew she was playing and felt relaxed with her and for that reason I got to spend some time working on a shot I had had in my mind for a very long time. That wasn't the shot actually! I missed the one I have in my mind – will save it for another encounter.

But this was a nice one of her surfing.

Anything else you'd like to add?

Mentoring is an interesting thing. It is very challenging at times and makes you really stretch yourself, but these are all positive signs that you're evolving your craft. That investment is completely outweighed by the excitement at seeing your evolution come through in your images and even more so when your clients and viewers get excited about your journey. Kim is, without

doubt, one of the best – he is proactive, really knows his stuff and genuinely drills into the creative process, pain and dreams. I certainly hope to keep working with him to see where my journey leads.



5. "NEW WORLDS WITH YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY" workshop - Saturday 24th November

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?

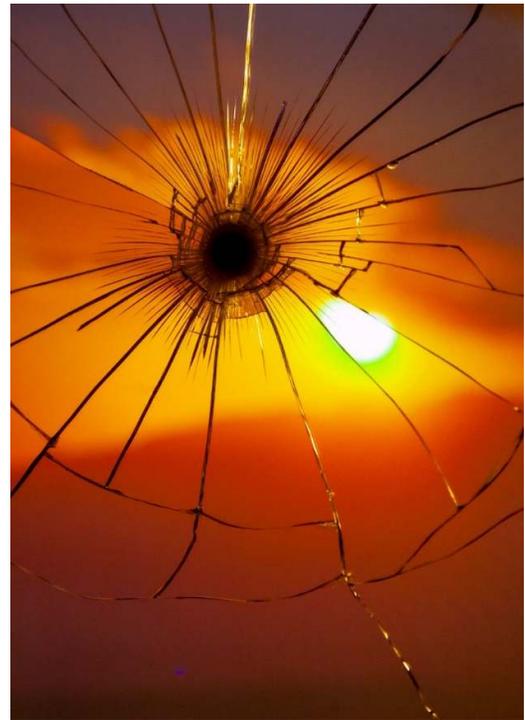
If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, then this is the workshop I've designed for you. In fact, I've been working on it for much of the year: researching &, looking for new "Wow!" ideas that you might like. And then experimenting, testing the ideas and their potential for a workshop.

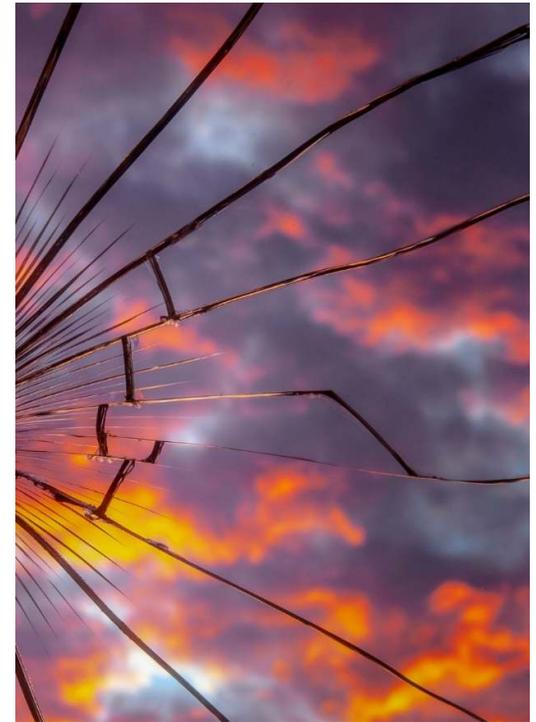
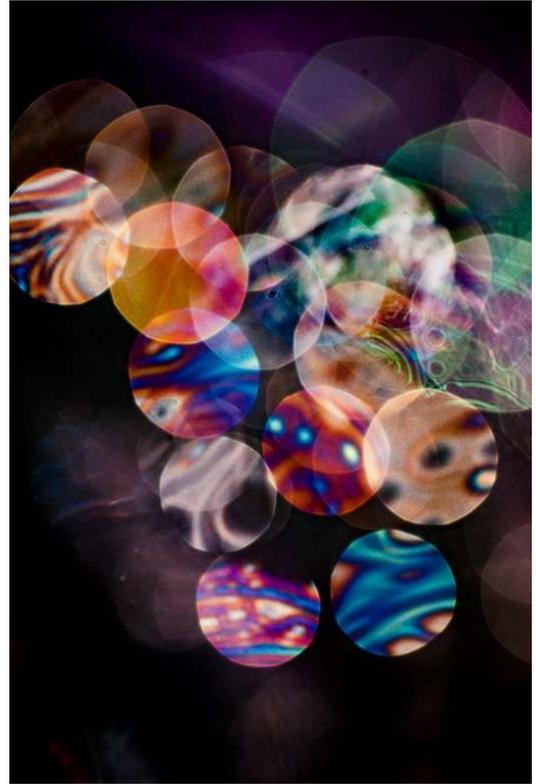
We'll explore the exciting possibilities of using mirrors [broken and unbroken], crystal glass balls, soap bubbles, effervescence, and many more ideas. All you need to do is bring yourself and your camera. I've already prepared the broken mirrors [not as easy as it sounds] and gathered together the other 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 [from Jeanette] 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 24th November. 9.00am – 5.00pm.

Cost: Full course fee [which includes tuition, hand-outs & Vivienne's yummy catering **\$295** - or **\$245** for Early Birds [if you register by 18th November]. Fulltime students with ID **\$145**.





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





6. [What's left of the] 2018 PROGRAMME

NOVEMBER

- **Saturday 24 November. "New worlds with your camera" workshop.** Full day.

DECEMBER

- **Tuesday 4th December. "Photos & Coffee" informal meeting.** 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.

7. PRIVATE TUITION

Yes, like you I'm usually busy doing "other stuff" too, but I can nearly always fit private tuition in, and am very happy to do so. First 2 hours: \$80 per hour, after that \$70 per hour. If you come again, it's \$70 per hour right from the first hour. 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.

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 you have me for the whole day.

8. MENTORING

"Mentoring" is the ongoing process of inspiring, advising, guiding, teaching, critiquing ... whatever is needed for the ongoing development of a photographer. It's one-on-one, so it's different for each person. One month it may be about equipment or Photoshop, next month it may be "I just want my photos to have more 'Wow' in them", the following month it may be about exhibitions or "Should I go pro?". **Who is mentoring for? Anybody. I mentor both established professional photographers and amateurs.** Minimum of 6 months. Cost? Not as much as you might think. Talk to Kim about what would work best for you.



Photos of Kim by Malcolm Macfarlane & Tony Whitehead

9. KIM'S PHOTOS & COFFEE EVENINGS

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. 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 for those of you who have not been before, you're very unlikely to feel out of your depth. Bring photos if you wish, but there's no obligation to bring any. Some people do, some don't.

The next one will be on Tuesday 4th December, starting 7.00pm. 18 Greerton Road, Gate Pa, Tauranga. Free, but please book by email.

10. PHOTOGRAPHING ARTWORKS, PHOTOSHOPPING, PHOTO RESTORATION

As well as teaching photography and mentoring a number of photographers, I also offer photo restoration, Photoshopping, and “Photographing your Artworks” services. \$50 per hour [we usually get a lot done each hour].

11. INVITATION TO ALL 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.

ABOUT KIM

- **Passionate about photography and passionate about inspiring, guiding, and supporting photographers.**
- Over 30 years as a professional photographer
- Five First Prizes in the BBC “Wildlife Photographer of the Year” competition, the Olympics of nature photography worldwide.
- 18 books published – written and photographed by Kim. Five are currently “in print”.
- Teaching photography for over 10 years now