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Newsletter from Kim Westerskov

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Newsletter #58 – July 2017

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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.



Emperor penguin chicks on parent's feet, Cape Crozier, Ross Island, Antarctica, early spring, temperature minus 30°C

1. SHARPNESS OR SOUL?

The start of an ongoing conversation. What's more important in your photos – sharpness or soul? Sharpness is good – unless it's a deliberately blurred photo - but if a photo doesn't have soul, then we're not achieving much.

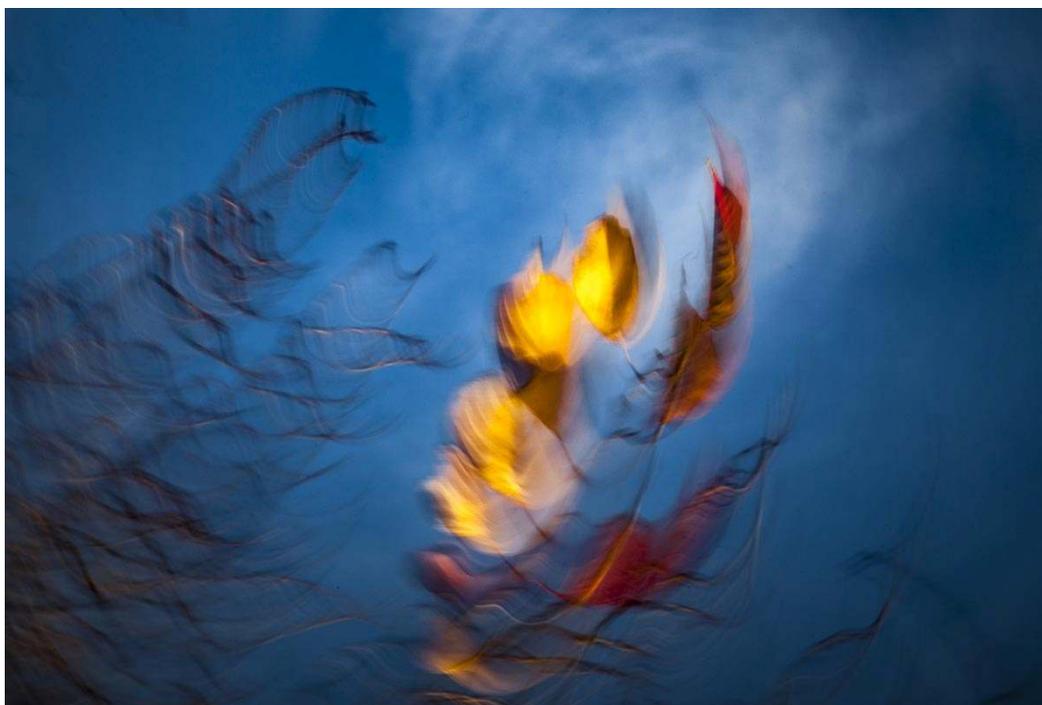
“Do all great photos have ‘soul’?” Yes, I think so. “Is that what makes them great photos?” Yes, I think so. “Fine. In that case what is ‘soul’, and how can I get soul into my photos?” Hmm ... I'm glad you asked.

I've been pondering what “soul” is - and how to get it in our photography - for years, and will continue to do so. The answers don't come easy, but I feel it's possibly the most important question I can ask.

In a photographic context, soul is the indefinable but vital essence at the centre of great art, at the centre of great music, at the centre of great photography, [possibly at the centre of life itself], an elusive something that causes the photo to elicit an emotional response in the viewer, a connectedness, an “Ah-hah!” of recognition, of familiarity, of “Yes, that matters”. The world [or at least some aspect of it] suddenly looks clearer, brighter, fuller, richer. Connections new and maybe deeper are apparent.

“That's all very well, Kim, so what do I do next time I take my camera out?” For starters, photograph that which you love, that which matters most to you. Your kids, your grandchildren, your partner, wider family, friends, where you live, your garden, your hobby, your sport, your dog or cat, the beach, the forest, wide open spaces ... Your best photos will be of places and subjects you already have real connections with.

2. PHOTO LESSONS - AND GIFTS - FROM OUR TREE

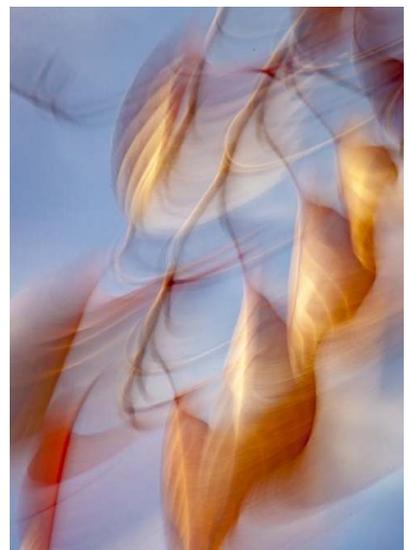
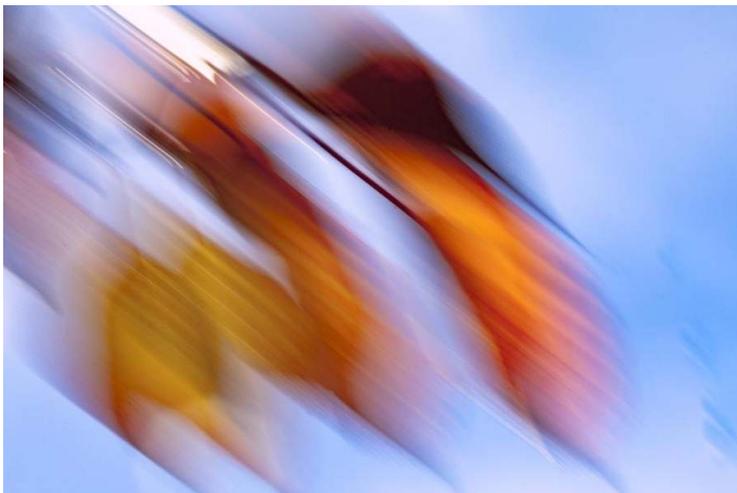


We have a large flowering cherry tree growing out the front of our section here in suburban Tauranga. The swing under a sturdy branch has given years of pleasure to many people, including our kids.

Like all deciduous trees, our flowering cherry is green from spring through to autumn when the leaves turn yellow, then orange, then red-brown and then carpet the lawn underneath. This tree has given much,

including some good lessons in photography. The main lesson I've learned is something like "good photos are anywhere, everywhere. If you can't see a good photo in front of you, then create it".

At the Photo Impressionism workshop here two weeks ago, we took many photos of that tree. Not ordinary "real" photos, but flowing impressionistic photos. After making sure that everyone was doing OK, I took some photos myself and later processed them. I was so excited by the results that big parts of the next few days were spent out under the same tree, looking, thinking, wondering, creating. Nearly every leaf had long since fallen from the branches, but a few still remained, clinging on through the occasional frost. I focussed my attention mostly on these few remaining leaves. These gave many gifts. Thank you, our tree.



3. FROM KIM'S FIELD DIARIES – ANTIPODES ISLANDS – part 2

From my field diaries:

2 March. Antipodes – coast, terns, parakeets, wanderers, 11 films

3 March. Antipodes – Stella Bay, sooties, albatross gams, 11 films

4 March – Antipodes – marine biology & dive, passage to Bounty Islands, 3 films

5 March Bounty Islands – too rough to land, 1 film

6 March – Bounty Islands – too rough to land, 2 films

7 March – Bounty Islands – most ashore except Cameron and Kim, passage to Antipodes Islands, 2 films

8 March – Antipodes Islands – transect and dive, 6 films

830 kilometres southeast of Stewart Island, the Antipodes are further away from the New Zealand mainland than all the other subantarctic islands, or the Chathams. There is one main island, measuring 7 x 5 kilometres, and six smaller islands. All are of volcanic origin, and all equally rugged, bleak and inhospitable. Most of the 32 km of coastline is cliff, and all of it is exposed to the full-bodied ocean swells that march in. Not a single tree rises above the low vegetation hugging the peaty soil over the volcanic rock beneath. There are some shrubs in gullies but mostly the ground is covered is tussock.

The Antipodes Islands have an unenviable reputation for strong winds, rough seas and atrocious weather. When the “President Felix Faure” ran aground here in heavy fog on 13 March 1908, all 22 men scrambled ashore and found the castaway hut - the smaller of the two buildings in the accompanying photo. For the next 60 days, they eked out the provisions in the hut with penguins, albatrosses, parakeets, fish and the roots of a low plant. They were rescued 60 days later – a much better outcome than that of many castaways. On 56 of those days it snowed, or hailed, or rained.



Our first day had been like that. My camera had died in the rain, but had been coaxed back to life back on the Monowai, our mother ship. Monowai was the hydrographic survey ship of the New Zealand Navy at the time, 89 metres long and 3860 tonnes.

So what was I doing there? I'd had managed to talk my way into joining a group of scientists and a film crew from the National Film Unit on an expedition to all of New Zealand's five subantarctic Island groups. I was along as both scientist and film crew. Fortunately for me, the film unit cameraman refused to get into the water with seals and sealions. “Beyond the Roaring Forties” was going to need good footage of these mammals underwater, so I put up my hand and offered to get it. I forgot to add that I'd never held a movie camera in my life, but I figured it couldn't be that hard. As it turned out, I got some great underwater film of both fur seals and sea lions, so that justified my place there. Beginner's luck? Who cares. Most of the time I wasn't needed for underwater filming and so was left on my own. I did indeed carry out some marine biology [transects and collections] but mostly I wandered around with my camera, photographing and enjoying the privilege of being there.

Erect crested penguins and rockhopper penguins breed in large numbers where the coastline isn't too steep for them to get ashore. Penguin colonies are noisy, messy, smelly places – but you'll never catch me complaining.

The Antipodes Islands are home to several thousand pairs of the distinctively dark Antipodean albatrosses. Meeting up with these magnificent birds on land meant fighting my way up through the thick coastal scrub and fern to the tussocky plateau. Up here, normally amid wind and mist, these splendid birds court, mate, nest, and rear their young.

Photo at right: South Bay. In June 1999, Jerry Clark [master mariner, adventurer, and one of New Zealand's sailing legends] and Roger Sale dropped two albatross researchers at Hut Cove at the northern end of the main island and headed to South Bay for anchorage during gale force northerly winds. They were never seen again. Wreckage from the 36ft Totorore was found in South Bay but exactly what happened to these highly experienced sailors remains a mystery. The sea is calm in this photo but the small bay is exposed to the prevailing south-westerly swell which even on calm days can be four metres.



The ground-dwelling Antipodes Island parakeet is found nowhere else in the world.



4. "PEOPLE PHOTOGRAPHY" WORKSHOP – 5 August

What are the most important photos you take? My answer would be people. Definitely. Even the ones we just "snapped" of family and friends take on more and more importance as the years go by. If I was heading off to Mars and could only take a few photos [there's not much room on those spaceships] – most would be of Anne, Gareth and Vivienne. Perhaps one or two of wider family & friends, plus a few hero photos from my long career out in nature.



There are many genres of people photography, and we'll look at each of these in turn: candid, family, children, portraits, events, street photography, travel [with particular emphasis on how to photograph people you've never met before] and weddings.



In this workshop we'll cover the gear, settings, approaches and techniques needed for great people photos. There will be some good handouts, including "cheat sheets" showing many different ways to pose people – poses that have been tried, tested, and always work well.

In the afternoon we'll put into practise what we learned in the morning – photographing real people. I originally thought we'd photograph each other, but

I've recently secured the services of my DDD [dearest darling daughter] Anne [that's her at bottom left] and her friend Tamrah who are happy to model for us. It should be a great day. Care to join us?



Saturday 5th August 9.00am – 5.00pm plus assignment and follow-up evening 2-3 weeks later for assignment evaluation [at a time that suits everyone]. The follow-up can be by email. **Cost:** Full course fee [which includes tuition, hand-outs, Vivienne's yummy catering, assignment and follow-up] **\$245**. Fulltime students with ID **\$135**





5. "MAKING PHOTOS 'POP' IN LIGHTROOM" – 26 August – half day

Turn this ...



into this



Turn this ...



into this



And turn this



...into this

“I like to get my photos right in the camera. I don’t need to process them on my computer later”.

I hear this quite often from amateurs [never from professionals]. It’s a nice idea, but I’ve never yet seen a photo that couldn’t be made to look better, usually considerably better, and often amazingly better, if taken into Lightroom or Photoshop or other photo processing program. The best of these programs, the Rolls Royces, the gold standards of photo processing, are Photoshop and/or Lightroom. Both are from the same stable [Adobe] and the photo processing tools are almost completely identical. Pretty much everything you can do while processing a photo in Lightroom you can also do in Photoshop, and vice versa. For every professional I know, Lightroom and/or Photoshop are a major part of their workflow.

Yes, I take care to get as good a photo as possible when I click the shutter, but EVERY single photo I take later goes into Photoshop [Lightroom would mostly do it equally well]. This short-and-sweet workshop is about getting your photos looking great using Lightroom’s “Develop Module”. So we won’t spend time in the Library Module or other modules – just the Develop Module. The engine that will make your photos POP!

For this workshop, I invite you to bring along some of your own photos, which I’ll take into Lightroom to show you how to I make them look great. For those photographers who don’t yet use Lightroom or Photoshop, this is often a “Wow!” moment. Quite often even serious photographers who have used Lightroom/Photoshop for years are surprised by how much better they can be made to look. We’re not talking about using Lightroom [or Photoshop] to make your photos look unreal or unnatural [though they can be used for that too, if you wish]. We’re talking here are about changing “real but dull” into “real and great”

Saturday 26th August 9.00am – 1.00pm. **Cost:** Full course fee [which includes tuition, hand-outs, morning tea] \$135 – or \$115 for Early Birds if you register by 16th August. Fulltime students with ID \$70.

6. BIRTHDAY OFFER

July 26 was Mick Jagger’s birthday. Mine too. I haven’t heard from Mick yet – maybe he’s busy or forgot this year. In the meantime, let me make you the same offer I made at this time last year – 15% off the cost of anything you book between 26 July and 26 August. Combine 15% with the discounted Early Bird prices for workshops and there’s some significant savings. Interested?

7. 2017 PROGRAMME

AUGUST

- Tuesday 1st August. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- Saturday 5th August. “People Photography” workshop. Full day.
- Saturday 26th August. “Making your photos look great in Lightroom or Photoshop”. Half day.

SEPTEMBER

- Tuesday 5th September. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- Sunday 10th September. “Good photos, great photos – anytime, anywhere” workshop. Full day.

OCTOBER

- Tuesday 3rd October. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Saturday-Sunday 14-15 October. “Great Photography Weekend” workshop.** Weekend + follow-up.
- **Saturday 28 October. “Photography 101” workshop.** Half day.

NOVEMBER

- Tuesday 7th November. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Saturday 18 November. “Close-up Magic – with or without a macro lens” workshop.** Full day.

DECEMBER

- Tuesday 5th December. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.

Half-day workshops 9.00am – 1.00pm

Full day & two day workshops 9.00am – 5.00pm

COST: Course fees include tuition, detailed hand-outs & yummy catering, plus assignment and follow-up evenings for full day and two-day workshops.

- **Half day workshops:** \$135 – or \$115 for Early Birds if you register by 10 days before workshop. Fulltime students with ID \$70.
- **One day workshops:** \$295 – or \$245 for Early Birds if you register by 10 days before workshop. Fulltime students with ID \$150.
- **Weekend workshops:** \$475 [\$425 Early Bird]. Fulltime students with ID \$235.

8. QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“Painters have an annoying habit of painting what they see, rather than what’s actually there.”
Chief Inspector Morse

I would argue that good photographers do that too, in the sense that “seeing” is how the photographer interprets what’s in front of them and shows why it matters, creating in a sense more than is there, more than what others see.

9. TWO GOOD PHOTO COMPETITIONS

NEW ZEALAND GEOGRAPHIC PHOTOGRAPHER OF THE YEAR. Got some photos taken in New Zealand you’re rather proud of? Entries are now open for the annual New Zealand Geographic Photographer of the Year competition. This is New Zealand’s largest and most prestigious photography competition. And the richest. There’s \$5,000 in real hard cash up for grabs, as well as an expedition voyage and some other great prizes. Entries close 13th September. <https://www.nzgeo.com/photography/entry/>

BIRDS A PLENTY PHOTO COMPETITION. An annual bird photography competition with good prizes. Its aims are to promote the beauty of, and encourage the appreciation of, NZ birds generally [one section], and birds of the Whakatane Harbour specifically [another section]. Entries close Friday 6th October 2017 www.facebook.com/BirdsAplentyPhotoCompetition
www.whakatane.com/events/birdsaplenty-photo-competition
The online form can be accessed at <https://goo.gl/forms/d4xEwigwpsshpLp1>

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 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.

12. 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. At present I'm mentoring both established professional photographers and amateurs.**



Photos of Kim by Malcolm Macfarlane & Tony Whitehead

1. At least 90 minutes [probably more] of my time every month. \$115/month.
2. At least 3 hours of my time [probably more] every month. \$165/ month.
3. At least 4 hours of my time [probably more] every month. \$200/ month.

Your mentor [me, Kim]:

- Over 30 years as a professional photographer
- Five First Prizes in the BBC "Wildlife Photographer of the Year" competition, the Olympics [or Oscars] of nature photography worldwide.
- 18 books published – written and photographed by me.
- **Passionate about photography and passionate about inspiring, guiding, and supporting photographers.**

13. KIM'S PHOTOS & COFFEE EVENINGS

We meet on the first Tuesday of each month [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.** These evenings are always fun and friendly. 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 news ideas and tips.** Bring photos if you wish, but there's no obligation to bring any. The next one is on Tuesday 1st August, starting 7.00pm. 18 Greerton Road, Tauranga.

14. 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.

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