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Newsletter from Kim Westerskov

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Newsletter #83 – March 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.



Sunset clouds and moon over Tauranga - 31st January 2020

1. REFLECTIONS FOR GREAT PHOTOS – part 2

In “Reflections – Part 1” we looked at using the thin slick of water on the beach at low tide to get great photos. Any sandy beach. Pretty much anytime, whether sunny or overcast or at sunset or even at night. To read the article again go to www.kimwesterskov.com/newsletters and click on the link for Newsletter #81.

Any shiny reflective surface can help you get great photos. As well as some more examples of my all-time favourite reflective surfaces [low tide slicks at the beach], let’s also look at other bodies of water where there’s little wind or water movement to ruffle the surface: lakes, rivers, streams, estuaries. And also cars and mirrors.

There’s not much I need to tell you about this kind of photo that’s not obvious from simply looking at these photos and then remembering the possibilities when you’re out with your camera. Anywhere you come across a reflective surface, there is considerable potential for good creative photos. Many multistory buildings with even a whiff of architectural creativity that were built in the last few decades have lots of glass and lots of potential for creative photography. Tip: get in close. Don’t photograph the whole building, but concentrate on a part of it so that your photo shows just the window frames and their reflections, adding a bit of mystery as the viewer sort of gets what is happening but is not entirely sure.

But I’m primarily a landscape and nature photographer, so I’ll show you mostly reflections found out in nature somewhere, and I’ll leave the multistory buildings to you. If you live in the Tauranga area, the new University of Waikato campus in downtown Tauranga will keep you happy for hours. Inside the building as well as outside. There’s much creativity gone into its design. Have fun!





The swan swimming through autumn reflections was at McLaren Falls Park. Vivienne's brand new red car is an excellent source of reflections and curved distortions. The tall kahikatea are reflected in the still waters of Arohaki Lagoon in the Whirinaki Te Pua-a-Tāne Conservation Park. Angie Belcher and I arranged a photo evening at Pukehina Beach around the ideas of the full moon, dusk, beach reflections – and a white dress. Thanks, Angie ☺. The unfurling fern frond is mirrored in a mirror held in my left hand close to the fern.





2. SO WHO NEEDS PHOTOSHOP?

Or Lightroom or any other photo editing programme?

“I get everything right in the camera, so I don’t need Photoshop.” Sound familiar? A surprising number of amateur photographers will tell you some version of this.

It’s a nice idea, getting everything right in the camera. Admirable. But there’s a lot of stuff you can’t do in the camera [but that you can do in Photoshop]. Cameras can only do technical stuff, which they generally do very well, often better and quicker than you can. But cameras don’t do “Creative”. Cameras know nothing of Moment or Connection or Soul or Atmosphere. That’s where you come in, not just when it’s time to press the shutter but also later on back home, editing your photos.

I would change “I try to get everything right in the camera, so I don’t need Photoshop” to “Get as much right in the camera as possible and then make it look even better in Photoshop”. That’s how I work. I put a lot of effort into getting it “as right as possible in the camera” and then every photo [100% of them] goes into Photoshop. I don’t want to add mermaids or rainbows. Unless I’m playing around in Photo Art [where there are no rules] I just want each photo to look as good as it can.

You wouldn’t go to the high school ball in shorts, jandals, and an old t-shirt. You would want to look as good as possible. You’d put effort into looking your very best for the important night. My photos feel the same way. SOOC [Straight Out of the Camera] is like shorts, jandals and an old T-shirt at a ball. My photos want to go to the ball looking GOOD. They want to look as good as possible. I want them to look as good as possible. So I spend a lot of time in Photoshop/Lightroom.

Here’s just one example that I was working on today. The photographers who attended the “Good photos, great photos, anytime, anywhere” workshop last year were let loose in the afternoon, roaming around our property, looking for and finding photos. They were obviously having fun – and finding good new photos, including ones I hadn’t thought of [but then tried myself]. This is one of the photos I took.

There’s a good moment here as Kaye and Billie [mother and daughter] are obviously “into it” and finding something good to photograph.



But straight out of the camera, there's a lot that could be better. First up, my van at the left is not adding anything useful to the photo, so it gets largely cropped out. The photo is also too contrasty, so let's lower the contrast, and even more importantly, the overall colour [the White Balance] is much too cold.

Done. That's the main things that needed doing. Anything else? "Not really" I thought at the time. But looking the photo some months later I thought "The heart of the photo, that which matters most, is Billie and her mum" and so I cropped out Jeremy [sorry Jeremy!], having to go a square format do so.

Anything else? It's Kaye and Billie that are important, not the houses in the background, so using a feathered adjustment brush I subtly lightened and softened [lowering the contrast] the background houses.

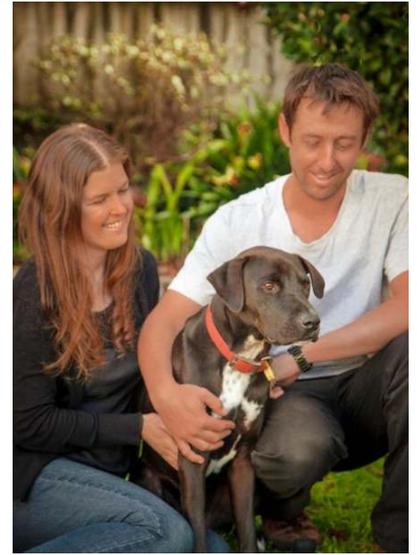


Good. Anything else? Cropping to square let me get rid of one of the ropes of the swing hanging from our flowering cherry tree, but the other rope now comes down through the centre of the photo. Take it out? Leave it in? There's a reasonable argument for "leaving it real", but if I'd been standing a bit to the left I could have got the shot without any ropes at all. In which case, let's take the rope out. Easy. "Content-Aware Fill" in Photoshop. Plus a bit of clone stamping to tidy it all up.

About SOOC [Straight Out Of the Camera]: A highly creative photographer friend of mine said recently: "I find it irritating when people disparage photo manipulation and say they only shoot out of camera as if it's some holy gospel – they don't seem to realize **all they're getting is some random engineer's interpretation and manipulation** instead"

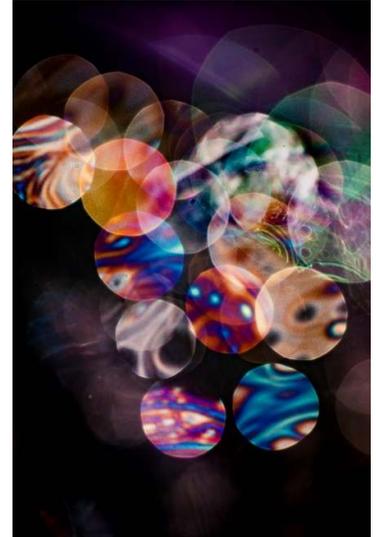
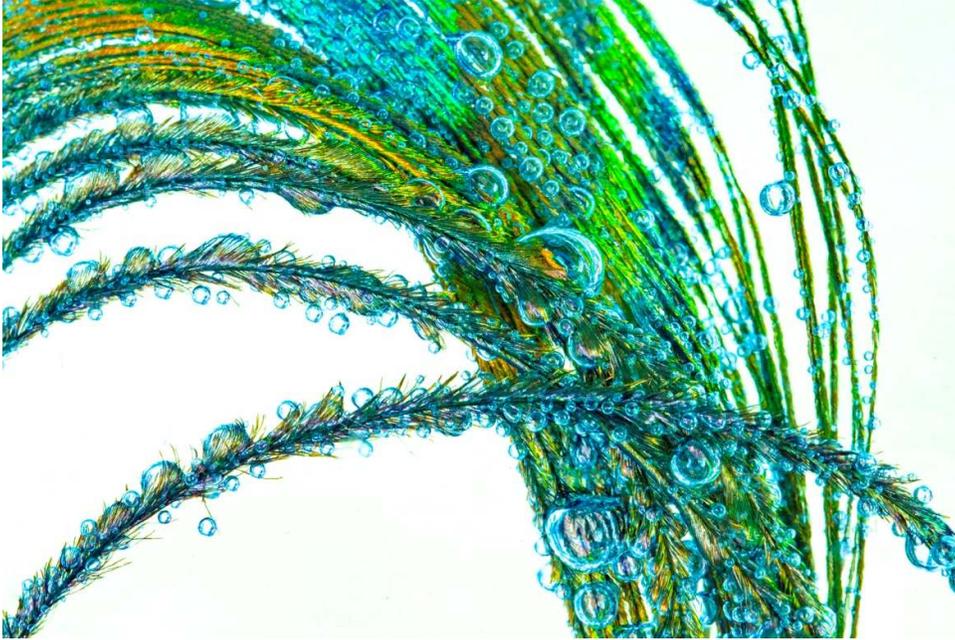
3. TWO RECENT WORKSHOPS





4. "CLOSE UP PHOTOGRAPHY – WITH OR WITHOUT A MACRO LENS" workshop
Sunday 29 March

Intimate Encounters with our amazing world
- finding magic, creating magic.



Many of you will really enjoy this workshop, I think. When I first ran it a few years ago I got very enthusiastic comments afterwards. One of the photographers, Hazel Ellis, took the techniques she'd learned, found some flowering Cosmos [just like we'd been photographing in Viv's garden here], added a Monarch butterfly caterpillar, and the resulting photo earned her a Highly Commended in the world's largest and most prestigious plant and flower photo competition, the **International Garden Photographer of the Year** - run by Kew Gardens in London. Hazel's photo is here <https://igpoty.com/competition-entries/cewb-12341274/> Hazel told me: "If it wasn't for that workshop I would never have been crawling around inside the plants in my garden trying out all the things I learned with you".

A whole new world opens up for you when you & your camera get up close and personal with the world we live in. I've been exploring both documentary ["real"] and creative [artistic/impressionist] close-up photography for some time now. On March 29 I'll run the third "Close Up Photography" workshop. The good news – as well as the fact that it's rewarding and fun - is that you don't need to own a special "macro lens". For most readers, you already have lenses that can get close enough to enter the wonderful and exciting world of close up.

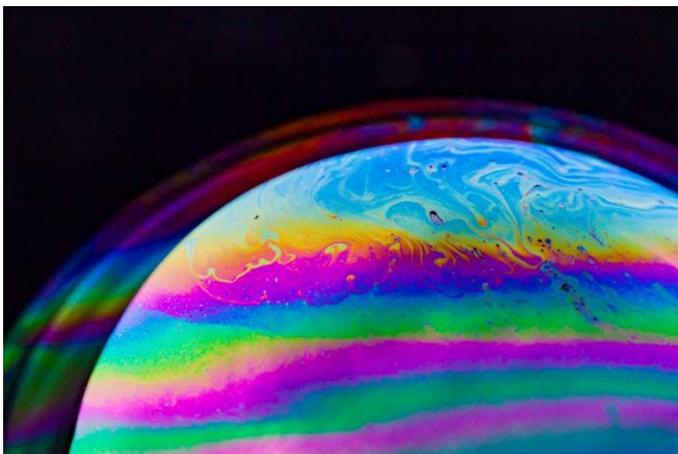
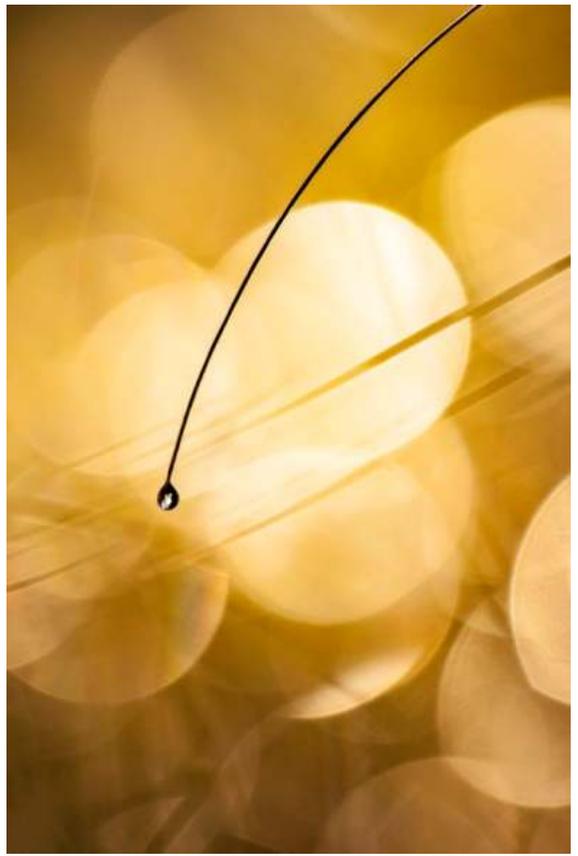
The workshop will, first of all, introduce you to the principles of close up photography – and to the technical stuff. Then we'll get on to finding magic and creating magic. **All of the accompanying photos were taken here on our property [where Anne and Gareth and Viv and I live], all within 20 metres of where you will be sitting – and photographing - in the workshop studio.** I will take you, step by step, through how I got these photos [and more] - and then in the afternoon, it will be hands-on. Cameras in hand, we will find magic and we will create magic. You will go home inspired and with your head buzzing with ideas and techniques. It should be a lot of fun.

"What level is this workshop for?" Any level. All levels.

Sunday 29 March 9.00 am – 5.00 pm 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] **\$295** - or **\$245** for Early Birds if you register before 19 March. Fulltime students with ID **\$145**.





5. Kim's 2020 PROGRAMME

FEBRUARY

- Tuesday 4th February – the first “Photos & Coffee” meeting of the year. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Saturday 22nd February. “Landscapes & Seascapes” photo workshop.** Full day plus follow-up.

MARCH

- Tuesday 3rd March. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Sunday 29th March. “Close Up Magic” workshop.** Full day plus follow-up.

APRIL

- Tuesday 7th April. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.

MAY

- **Saturday 2nd May. “Photo Essentials” workshop.** Full day plus follow-up.
- Tuesday 5th May. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Sunday 24th May. “Slow, smooth & wonderful – long exposures” workshop.** Full day plus follow-up.

JUNE

- Tuesday 2nd June. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Saturday 20th June. “Great people photos” workshop.** Portraits, kids, families, candid, travel, events, weddings. Full day plus follow-up

JULY

- Tuesday 7th July. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Sunday 19th July. “Photo Impressionism & Photo Art” workshop.** Full day plus follow-up.

AUGUST

- Tuesday 4th August. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Saturday 15th August. “Zap, Zing, Wow! & Creativity” photo workshop.** Full day plus follow-up.

SEPTEMBER

- Tuesday 1st September. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Sunday 13th September. “Composition & Light” photo workshop.** Full day plus follow-up.

OCTOBER

- Tuesday 6th October. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.
- **Saturday 10th October. “Even more exciting new techniques” photo workshop.** Full day plus follow-up.

NOVEMBER

- **Sunday 1st November. “Good photos, great photos – anytime, anywhere” photo workshop.** Full day plus follow-up.
- Tuesday 3rd November. “Photos & Coffee” informal meeting. 7.00 – 10.00pm. Free.

DECEMBER

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

One day workshops are from 9.00 am – 5.00 pm

COST: Course fees include tuition, detailed hand-outs, yummy catering, plus [for most workshops] an assignment and follow-up evening.

- **One day workshops:** \$295 – or \$245 for Early Birds if you register by 10 days before the workshop. Fulltime students with ID \$145.

6. “MENTORING BY KIM”

Mentoring individual photographers to the best of my ability is time-intensive, so I’m only able to mentor a few photographers at any one time. I have just a few places still open for 2020.

“Mentoring by Kim” is for serious photographers who want to get better, much better, to make more compelling images, and who realize that great photography is not something that you can spend a few hours on and “have it sorted” by 7 pm tonight.

How good do you have to be to be mentored? It absolutely doesn’t matter, truly. I’m just as happy mentoring keen beginners who know nothing much more than where the “Auto” button is as I am mentoring successful professionals. The kind of camera and lenses you have don’t matter either. All that matters is that you are keen and willing to put in some effort into learning and trying. It’s a journey, and for that reason “Mentoring by Kim” is for a minimum of 6 months. After that, you can choose to finish or to carry on.

So what happens during that time? Whatever is needed to make you a better - and happier - photographer. “Mentoring” is the ongoing process of inspiring, advising, guiding, teaching, critiquing ... whatever is needed for your ongoing development as a photographer. It’s one-on-one, so it’s different for each person. One day it may be about equipment or Photoshop, next week 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?”

Do you need to live in Tauranga or travel to Tauranga for mentoring? No. Face-to-face time every now and then is great, but most mentoring can be done by email or over the phone [or Skype]. One photographer I’ve mentored for some years lives in Dunedin and although we’re in contact often, I see him only once every few years. Another photographer lives an hour’s drive from Tauranga and comes over for a full day with me once every month or so. Between visits, we’re regularly in contact, often daily. For a very reasonable \$450 per month you get access to me pretty much whenever you want, daily if need be. But most importantly, it’s whatever works best for you. I take the mentoring seriously and I’m there for you. I want you to succeed.



If you don't need the full mentoring program, a second option is "Mentoring Lite". For \$225 per month, you get a "light" version of the mentoring program.

Here's what two of the photographers I've been mentoring have said:

Pam Thomson [Te Awamutu]: "I have been mentored by Kim for about 18 months now, and have wanted to do it for a couple of years. I wish I had done it sooner. Kim is a wonderful Mentor, gives great encouragement, and has so much knowledge to share... He gives very honest, thoughtful, critique. The Mentoring is led by you. **It's the best thing I've ever done**".

Derek Morrison [Dunedin], 2018 New Zealand Geographic Photographer of the Year: "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 wanted a raw and unfiltered appraisal of where I was at and where I wanted to go. I got that with Kim". **Was there any connection between the mentoring and your NZ Geographic Photographer of the Year win? "Of course"**.

Photos of Kim by Tony Whitehead, James Frankham, Malcolm Macfarlane. & I'm afraid I don't remember who took the photo at McLaren Falls.



7. 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 7th April** starting 7.00 pm. 18 Greerton Road, Gate Pa, Tauranga.

8. 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.

9. 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].

10. 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.

ABOUT KIM

- **Passionate about photography and passionate about inspiring, guiding, and supporting photographers.**
- Over 30 years as a professional photographer and teaching photography for 12 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](http://kimwesterskov.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/f11_Magazine_March-2015_Westerskov_2_4MB.pdf)