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SUBSCRIPTIONS

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES

1 year/7 issues \$63.00

1 year PLUS (print + digital) \$69.00

VISIT: GREATMAGAZINES.COM.AU

Australian Photography

is published by Yaffa Media Pty Ltd.

ABN 54 002 699 354

17-21 Bellevue Street,

Surry Hills, NSW 2010.

Ph: (02) 9281 2333

All mail to:

GPO Box 606, Sydney NSW 2001



Yaffa Photographic Group

includes:

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Publisher: James Ostinga

Marketing Manager: Annette Mitrevska

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ISSN 0004-9964

A window to another world – a frame from one of my rare landscape photography trips, this time to a hut in Arthur's Pass, in the South Island, New Zealand, earlier this year.

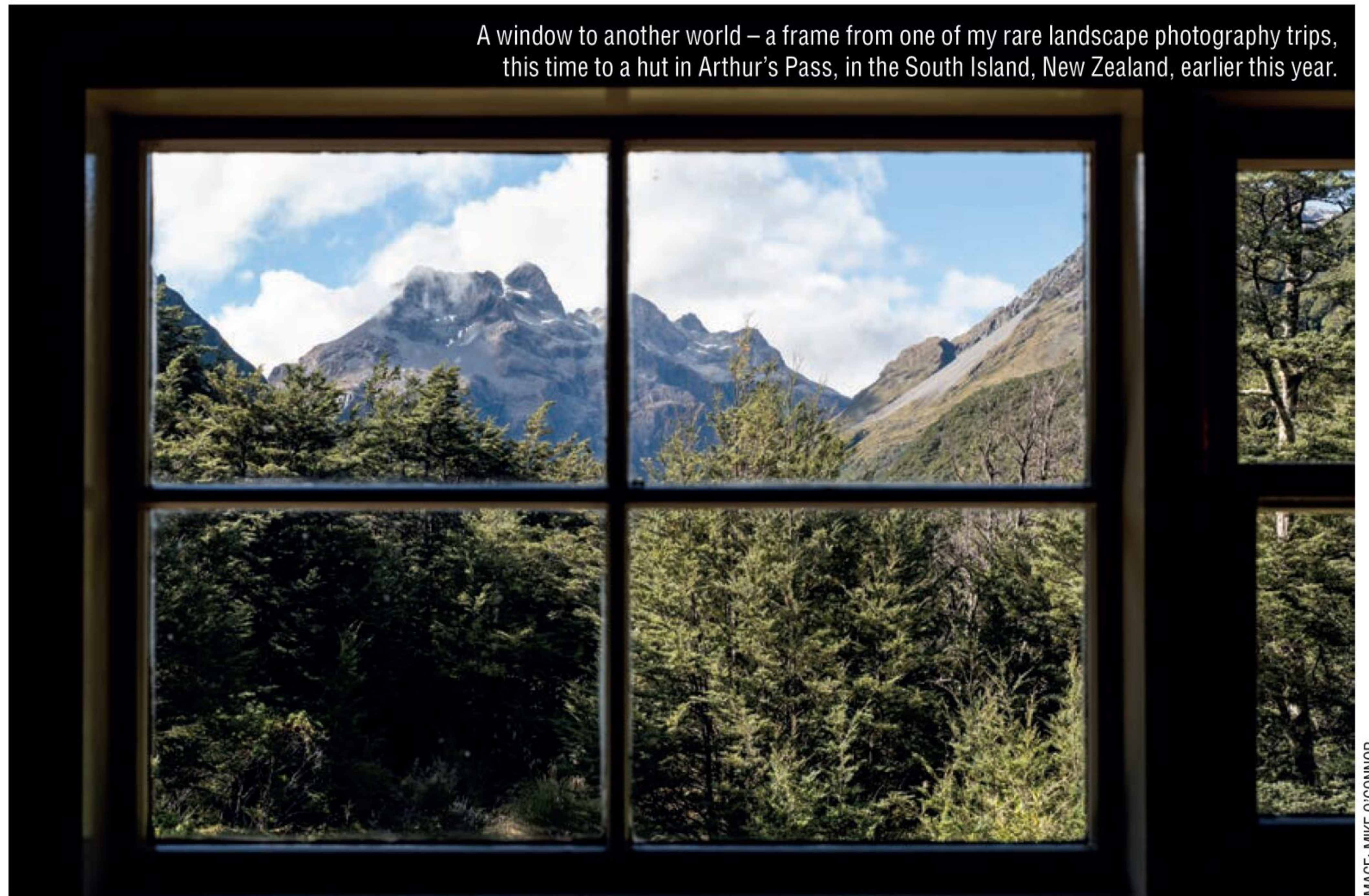


IMAGE: MIKE O'CONNOR

TIME ON YOUR SIDE

MIKE O'CONNOR, EDITOR

As someone who doesn't get to spend as much time shooting landscapes as they'd like, there's something deeply inspiring, and maybe a little envy-inducing, about browsing the winners of the Landscape Awards.

Perhaps that's because landscape photography, much like wildlife photography, rewards time and patience above almost everything else. These days, like many of us, my life is busy and well, nature moves at its own pace. I suppose that disconnect is part of what makes the genre so appealing in the first place!

To co-opt a well-known expression, if you want to do landscape photography well, time really needs to be on your side. Long exposures are one expression of that, but so is the willingness to wait for conditions, light and timing to align. Sometimes the image comes together in a moment, but I think it's more likely to take minutes, hours or, at the extreme end, years before everything finally falls into place in front of the camera and you capture the shot you've been dreaming about.

And while browsing the results of a competition like the Landscape Awards can make it all look effortless,

the reality behind the images in these pages is that in many cases they are a product of countless early mornings, the constant checking of forecasts and apps, the backwards and forwards of picking the right gear, and the endless weighing up of conditions that might influence the final frame. In an era built around instant gratification, landscape photography is decidedly old school, rewarding patience, persistence and a healthy amount of luck too.

And so, for us, these images are more than simply photographs from some of the region's best photographers to admire. They're a reminder to slow down, trust the process, and keep returning to the places and ideas that stay with us, knowing that sometimes the best photographs are the ones worth waiting for. I hope you enjoy them as much as we do. 🌟



JUNE - JULY 2026

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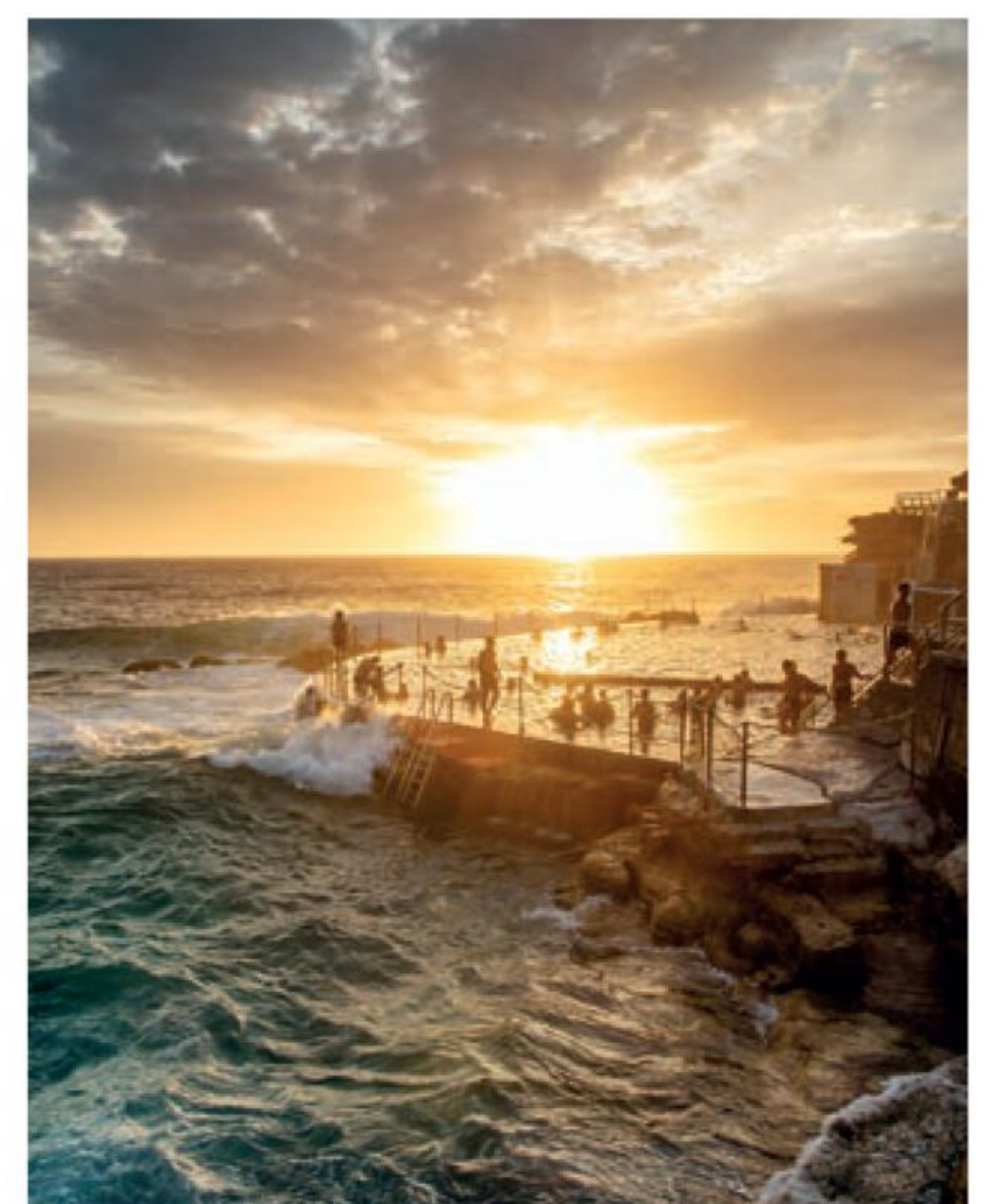
30



40



48



THIS ISSUE'S COVER: Captured by photographer Mark Appleton, his image *Summer Peak Hour* placed in the top 30 of The Landscape Awards 2026. Shot at Bronte Pool on a summer morning, Appleton says he waited for the sunlight to wash across the scene, creating a strong sense of warmth as swimmers jostled for position in the cool water below.

INSPIRING PHOTOGRAPHY



COURSES, WORKSHOPS AND TOURS IN NZ



PHOTO BY RICHARD YOUNG



PHOTO BY GLEN HOWEY



PHOTO BY KEN WRIGHT

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Mackenzie Country - Mt Cook -
Ashburton Lakes

New Zealand Winter Photography Tour

7 Days

3rd - 9th August 2026

Ashburton Lakes - Mackenzie Country -
Mt Cook

NZ South Island Highlights Photo Tour

19 Days

17th September - 5th October 2026

Milford - Catlins - Wanaka - Mt Cook -
Kaikoura - Marlborough - Golden Bay

NZ Southern Explorer Photo Tour

11 Days

17th - 27th September 2026

Milford - Catlins - Wanaka - Mt Cook

NZ Southern Coastal Photography Tour

7 Days

29th September - 5th October 2026

Kaikoura - Marlborough - Golden Bay



PHOTO BY GLEN HOWEY



PHOTO BY GLEN HOWEY

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YOUR BEST SHOT

BIG AND SMALL

One of the cool things photography lets you do is experiment with perspective in unique and interesting ways – and emphasising size is a great way to do just this. From wildlife to architecture and portraiture too, these were our picks from a hotly contested field this issue.

**THIS
MONTH'S
WINNER**





DEBBIE HARTLEY

Nautilus Pencils

EDITOR'S COMMENT

We really enjoyed the hypnotising creativity on display in Debbie Hartley's Nautilus Pencils – an image that looks deceptively simple, but is the result of careful balance and precision.

Photographed using natural light on a white background, the pencils are arranged to form the shape of a nautilus shell, echoing nature's sense of perfect symmetry in a very bright way – well done.

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Canon R5, Sigma 50mm art lens. 1/60s @ f5.6, ISO 1250.



JOHN PETERS

Cannibalistic Appetite

EDITOR'S COMMENT

We've been following the work of John Peters since he won the Wildlife and Animal category in Photographer of the Year, and it was hard to go past this striking take on big and small in Your Best Shot either.

Here, a tiny male peacock spider (*Maratus scutulatus*) finds itself in a tense moment alongside Australia's largest jumping spider, a male *Mopsus mormon*.

"Though the *Mopsus mormon* continued to munch away on its meal, I still managed to get a 37x image focus stack at around 1.5x magnification, with the series of shots having minimal movement, allowing a clean stacked result," he says.

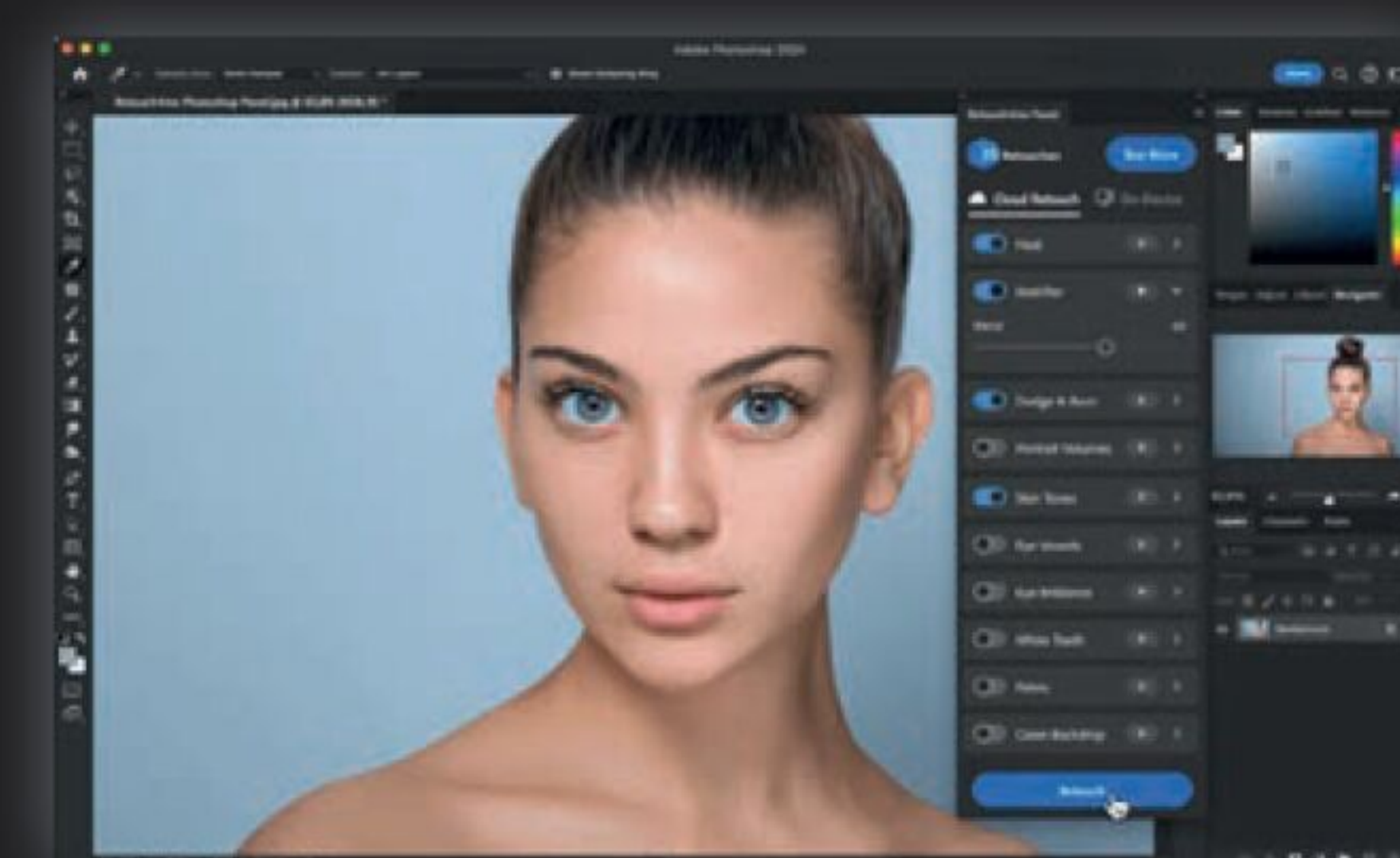
There's something magical about the tiny worlds that macro photography opens up, and this is one of the best examples of why. A technically perfect shot with lots of amazing details to explore.

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Sony A6400, Viltrox 25mm f/1.7 lens. 1/250s @ f1.7, ISO 2000.

As our winner, John Peters takes home access to three Retouch4me photo retouching apps valued at \$360. Retouch4me retouching apps are available as Photoshop plugins and standalone apps. Options include Heal, Dodge & Burn, Eyes Bundle, Fabric, Skin Mask, Portrait Volumes, Clean Backdrop, Skin Tone, White Teeth, Mattifier, Color Match and Dust.

YOU CAN FIND OUT MORE AT [RETOUCH4.ME](https://retouch4me.com).





CRAIG BALDWIN

Big City-Small Boat

HOW I DID IT

This shot was captured on Sydney Harbour. We were entering the harbour on board a cruise ship and I captured this small boat heading out of the harbour at dawn as we were arriving to dock and disembark our cruise. The small boat stood out as the sole boat with the large cityscape for its backdrop.

TECHNICAL DETAILS

None provided.

ALAN COLIGADO

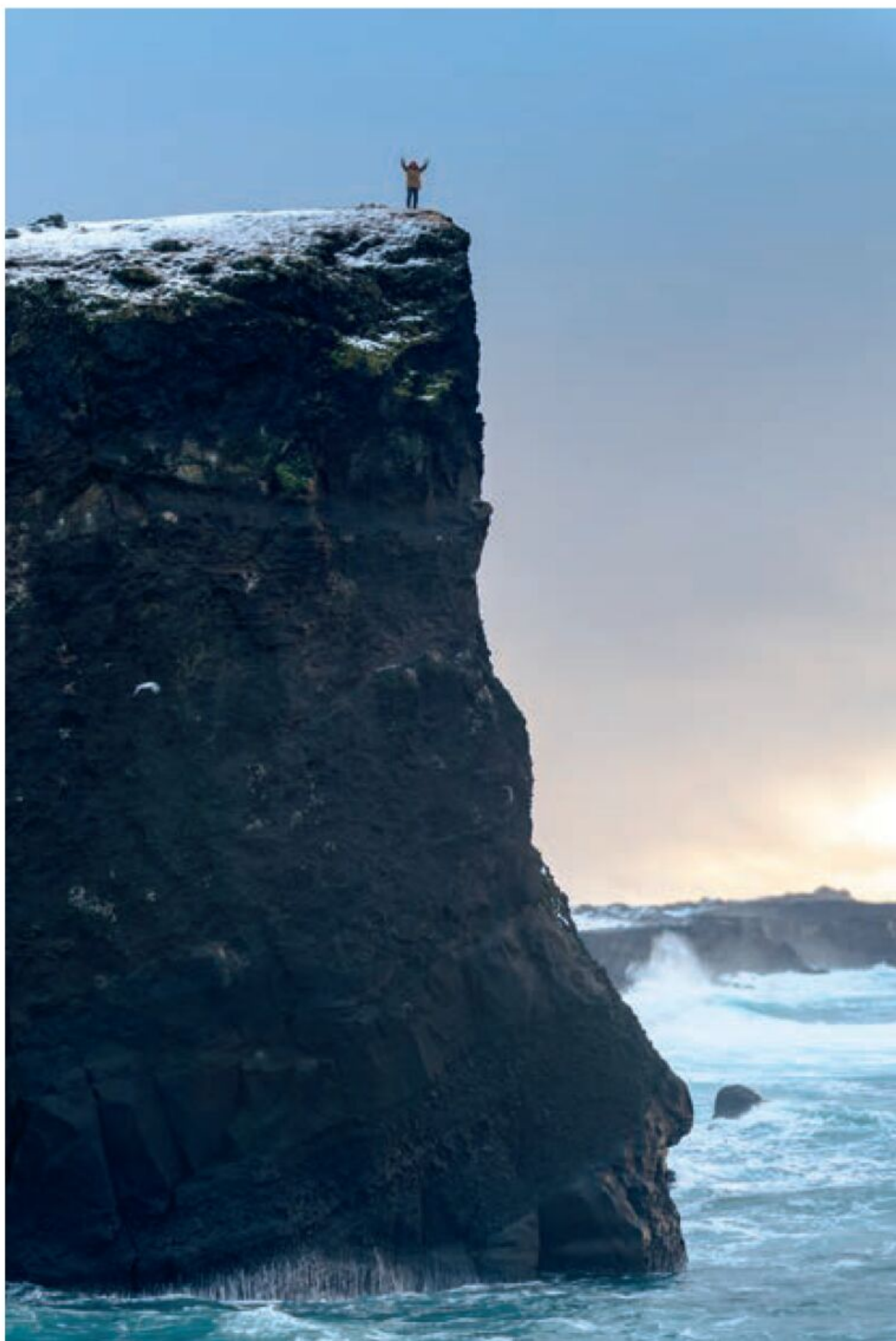
Stop and stare

HOW I DID IT

As striking as this larger-than-life street mural in Melbourne is, I waited for a real-life figure to walk past and stop momentarily, to underline its scale.

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Sony A7 III, Sony GM 24-70 lens @ 47mm. 1/80s @ f8, ISO 640.



MICHAEL LEYDEN

Cliff top volunteer

HOW I DID IT

On a photo tour to Iceland, we visited a cliffs area near the Reykjanes Lighthouse. One of the photographers volunteered to climb and stand on the opposite cliff to where we were set up, just to add scale. In January, the sun doesn't rise high over the horizon and sets early in the afternoon. The sun's decreasing glow is on the right of the image.

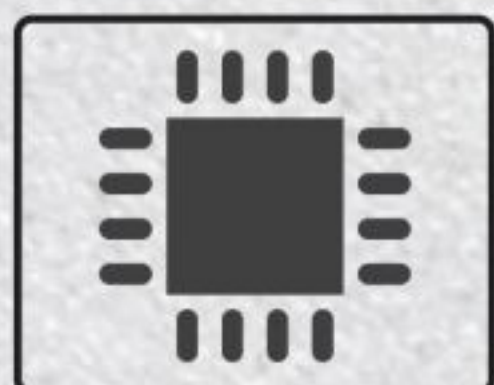
TECHNICAL DETAILS

Nikon D850, Sigma 70-200mm F/2.8 lens @ 98mm. 1/50s @ f10, ISO 500.



Featured image: "Solitude" by Forough Yavari

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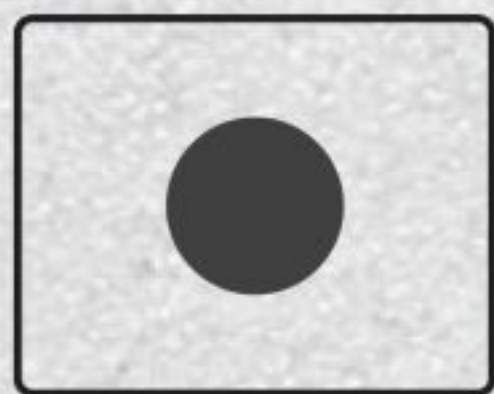
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YOUR BEST SHOT



PENELOPE ROBERTSHAW

Big and small

HOW I DID IT

This little boy was fascinated by the statue of Pope John Paul II outside St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney. I took a series of shots but this one ended up being my favourite. I couldn't help but be charmed by his innocence and curiosity.

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Nikon Z7 II, Nikon AF-S 50 mm f/1.4 G lens. 1/400s @ f9, ISO 400.

HOW TO ENTER

YOUR BEST SHOT IS OPEN TO ANYONE IN AUSTRALIA. TO ENTER AN IMAGE IN THE COMP, CHECK THE COMPETITION THEMES AND ENTER AT [AUSTRALIANPHOTOGRAPHY.COM/YAFPHOTOCOMPETITION/YOUR-BEST-SHOT](https://australianphotography.com/yafphotocompetition/your-best-shot)

UPCOMING COMPETITION THEMES



AUGUST 2026
SOFT LIGHT
31 May 2026



OCTOBER 2026
MINIMALISM
31 July 2026



DECEMBER 2026
LIGHT/SHADOW
30 September 2026



FEBRUARY 2027
OCEAN
30 November 2026

YOUR ENTRY

1. Email your entry to yourbestshot@australianphotography.com with the name of the competition theme in the email subject line, for example: Weather, Abstract, Landscape, etc.
2. The image file must be the same as your name, for example Jane Smith.jpg. If you enter multiple images, each new image file name should be appended with a unique number, eg Jane Smith2.jpg
3. A maximum of three images can be entered per person.
4. Images must be in JPEG format.
5. Email file size must not exceed 7MB.
6. Please include the following information about your entry in the body of your email: Name, image title and up to 200 words explaining how you created your image. Please also include technical details including camera, lens, focal length, shutter speed, aperture, ISO, tripod (if used) and a brief summary of any software edits.



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THE Landscape AWARDS | 2026

We're delighted to announce the winners of the Landscape Awards 2026, presented by WD, with four standout images sharing top honours across this year's competition.

An astro photograph of rare beauty, a unique take on a well-known seascape, a compelling abstract aerial and a striking reflection captured inside a Melbourne building rose to the top of their respective categories, highlighting the creativity and diversity of work being produced across Australia and New Zealand.

Now in its fourth year, the Landscape Awards continues to grow, with more than 2,000 entries submitted in 2026 and a prize pool valued at over \$22,000.

The competition recognises photographers across four categories — Landscape,

Seascape, Aerial and Urban — and we were once again hugely impressed by the depth of talent and the wide range of interpretations of place.

We're also proud to continue supporting conservation through the competition. This year, we chose The Wilderness Society, with more than \$4,600 raised through your entries in the competition, bringing the total contribution from our entrants to nearly \$30,000 over the past four years.

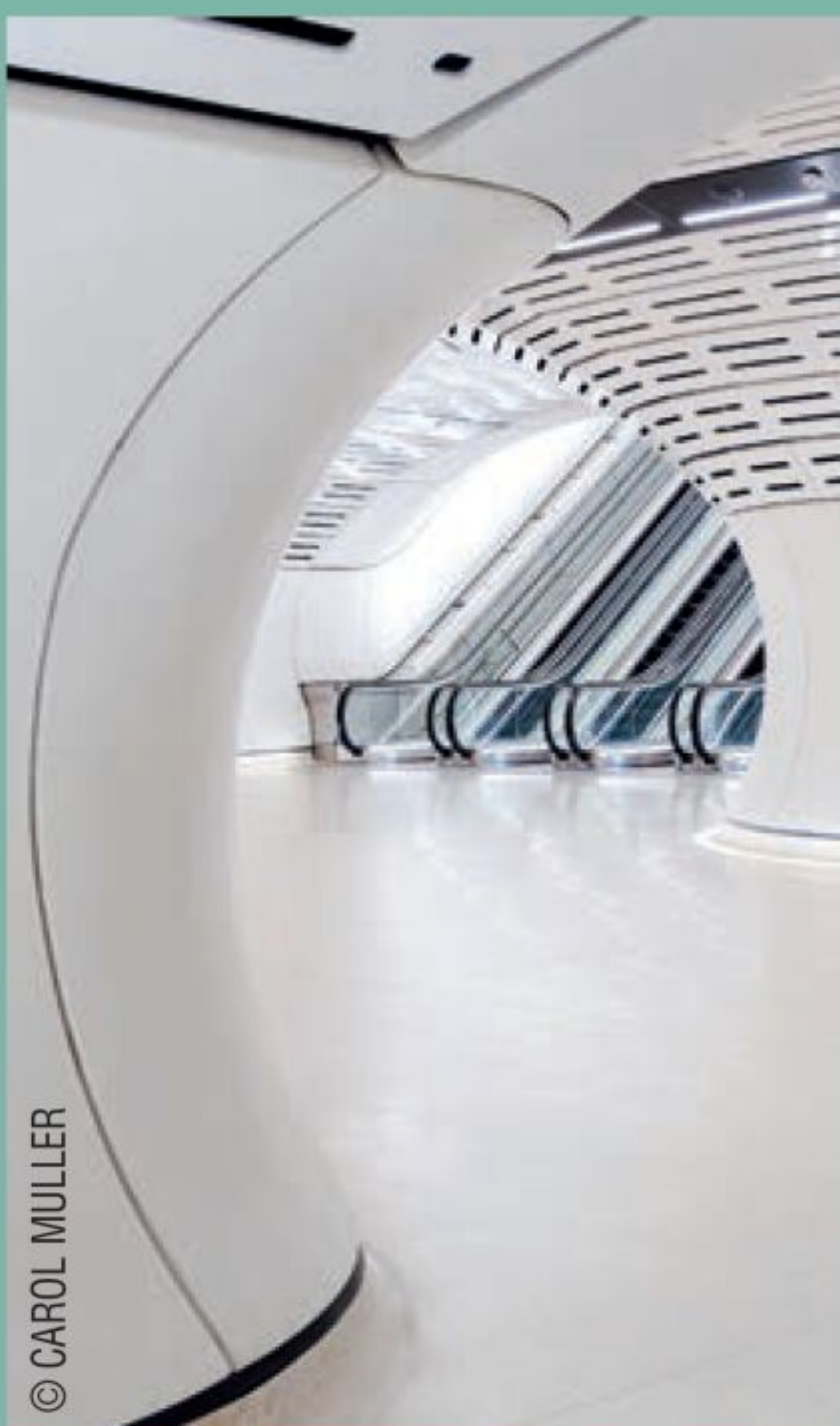
Our sincere thanks go to this year's judging panel — Matt Palmer, Petra Leary, Serena Ho, Steph Vella, Ignacio Palacios and

Anthony McKee — for the time and care they brought to reviewing this year's entries.

We'd also like to acknowledge the generous support of our sponsors WD, Camera House, EIZO, and OM System, whose ongoing backing helps make the awards possible.

Finally, thank you to everyone who entered. The quality of your work continues to inspire us, and it's clear that landscape photography remains a powerful way of sharing the places that matter most.

The competition will open again in October.





OVERALL WINNER AND WINNER, LANDSCAPE CATEGORY GLENN YOUNG

A fateful trip to the Red Centre in 2015 sparked Glenn Young's love for photography, and the Newport, Queensland photographer describes himself as lucky that he can now travel more often since retiring.

"I love to share this beauty with people, it's not always easy to do this and so the journey continues for me," he says.

 [glennyoung_photo](#)

CHAPEL TO THE STARS. While travelling, Glenn had heard whispers of a beautiful, derelict stone church tucked away in an isolated spot, and was determined to capture it beneath the night sky.

"I did my planning for clear skies and the correct day and time for the Milky Way and then one very early morning I set about taking the photographs," he recalls.

"Unfortunately a very thick fog rolled in. At first I was miffed that my planned photos would fail and almost gave up, but then I was taken by the beauty of what I saw before me. The church looked mystical and ethereal and the stars and the Milky Way shone like I had never seen before in a most beautiful way. I kept taking photos until dawn and it was such a very special moment for me."

That sense of beauty, touched with a hint of mystery, made for a compelling image that impressed the judges not just for its technical excellence, but also for its storytelling.

Prize: OM-3 camera and lenses valued at \$5,896, WD Professional Pack valued at \$1,500, \$1,500 cash.



WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

The soft, ground-level haze in this image creates a ghostly foundation for the sharpness of the Milky Way above. It gives the building itself both an ancient and otherworldly ambience. The composition balances the weight of the architecture with the weightlessness of our galaxy. It is a quiet reminder that humans are connected to the stars. **Serena Ho**

This photograph immediately stood out to me for its thoughtful use of perspective and framing, combined with beautifully balanced lighting and atmospheric haze that seamlessly connects the sky to the foreground. The Milky Way is perfectly positioned above the structure, and the choice of location works exceptionally well, mimicking the subtle white highlights of the plants against the expansive, star-filled night sky. **Petra Leary**



RUNNER-UP DANI WATSON

Melbourne's Dani Watson is a destination photographer with a Master of Arts Photography, known for her quiet, considered approach to landscape imagery.

She says her practice continues to evolve through an ongoing exploration of personal narrative and her relationship with the land.

 @daniwatsonau

FIELDS REMEMBER. Dani says this image, captured in Central Highlands, Victoria, has always 'felt like home'.

"The old farmhouse sits quietly in the middle of it all. Worn down, rusted, but still standing. To me, it's everything I love about Australia—raw, resilient, and real."

"A lot of my work is captured in places that feel familiar to me, so it felt like the right place to share this image in the Landscape Awards."

Prize: \$500 cash, \$150 Camera House gift card.



WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

This old farmhouse in Victoria might be nearing 100 years old, but it has probably never looked as amazing as in Dani Watson's photograph 'Fields Remember'. A rapeseed crop in full bloom and a gorgeous sunset contribute a lot to this image, but Dani's careful panorama treatment and good exposure management also adds a lot to majesty of this image. Overall, it is a beautiful capture that most photographers would envy. **Anthony McKee**

For me, this image evokes a powerful sense of memory embedded in the landscape. It's a quiet, almost haunting scene where cultivated fields stretch into the distance under a soft, diffused light. Beautifully captured. **Ignacio Palacios**

TOP 20

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3 ROBERT JARMYN FLAMINGO LIFE - LAGUNA COLORADA



4 JOANNE COSTANZO DESERT MOON



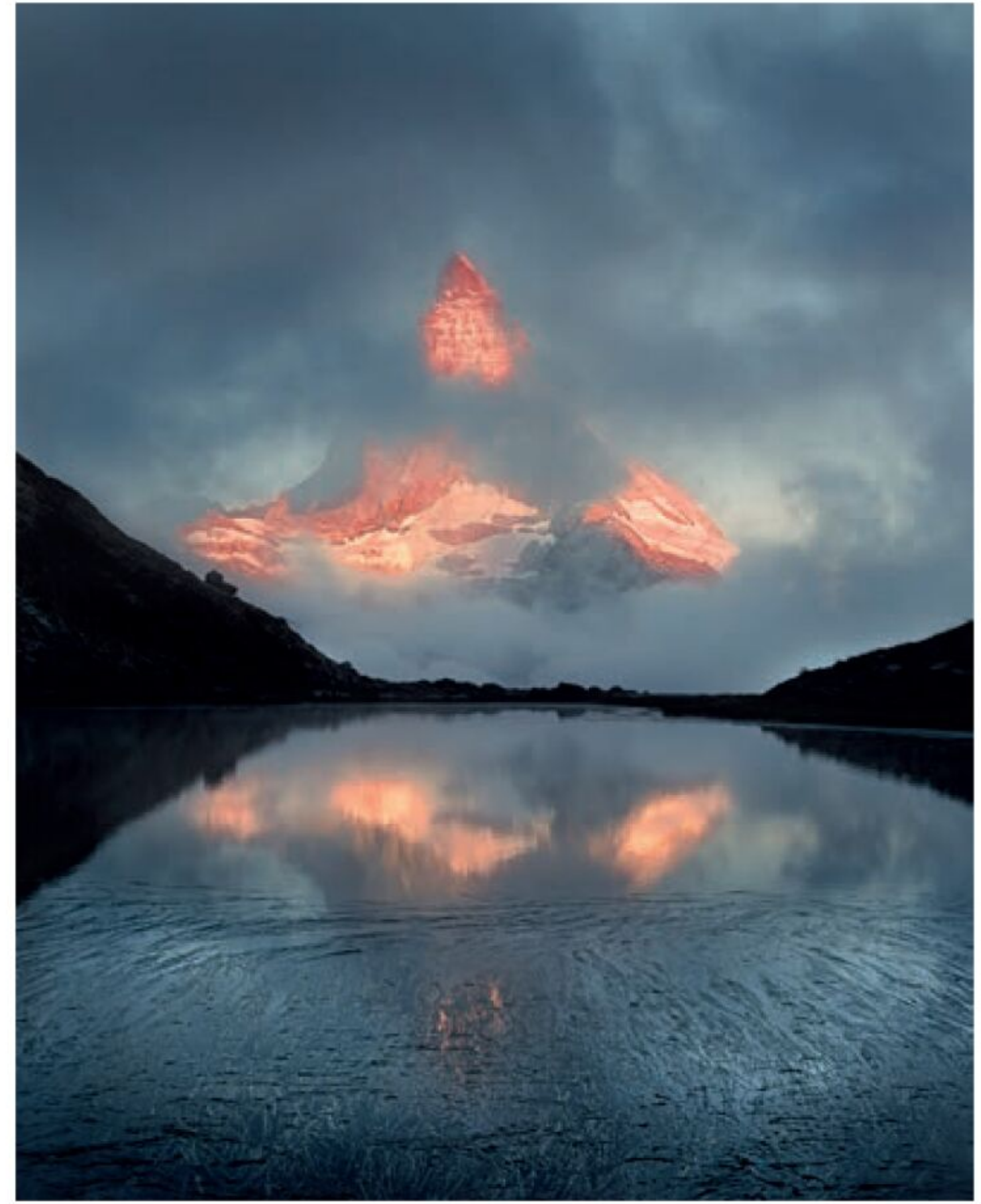
5 AARON HAWKINS DUST STORM



6 GINNIE ALLWOOD ANTARCTIC MIST



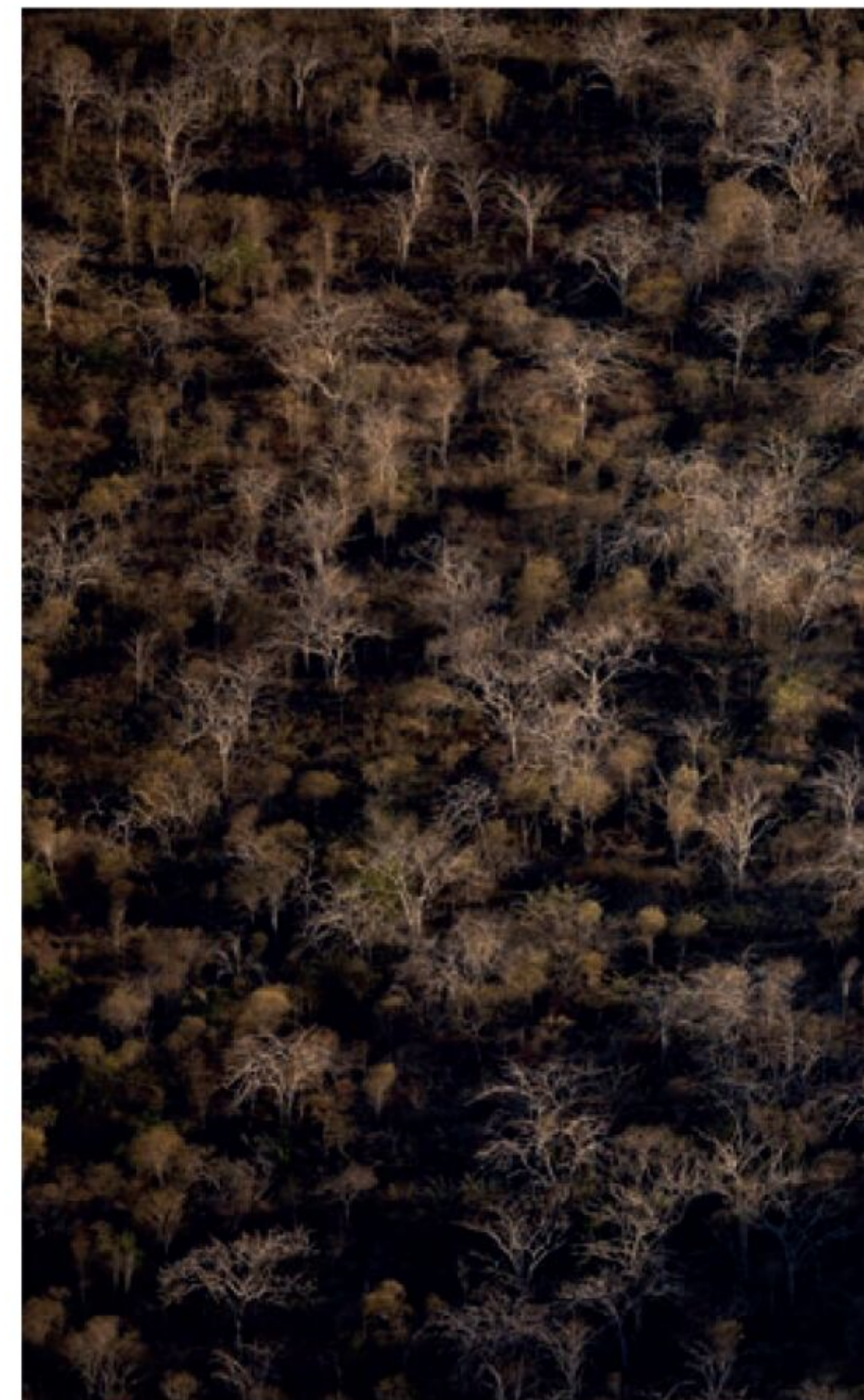
7 LAURA SYMES MY UNIVERSE



8 UDESH HANGILI GEDARA THE BURNING PEAK



11 TONY FITZGERALD SHIFTING SANDS





9 AMY HUGHES ECHOES OF WINTER - NASEBY



10 JACK JOHNSON FLEETING



12 SARAH WONG CRATER FOREST



13 CHRISTY TOMS SKY OF TWO WONDERS



14 SONJA BELLA ORCHESTRA OF COLORS



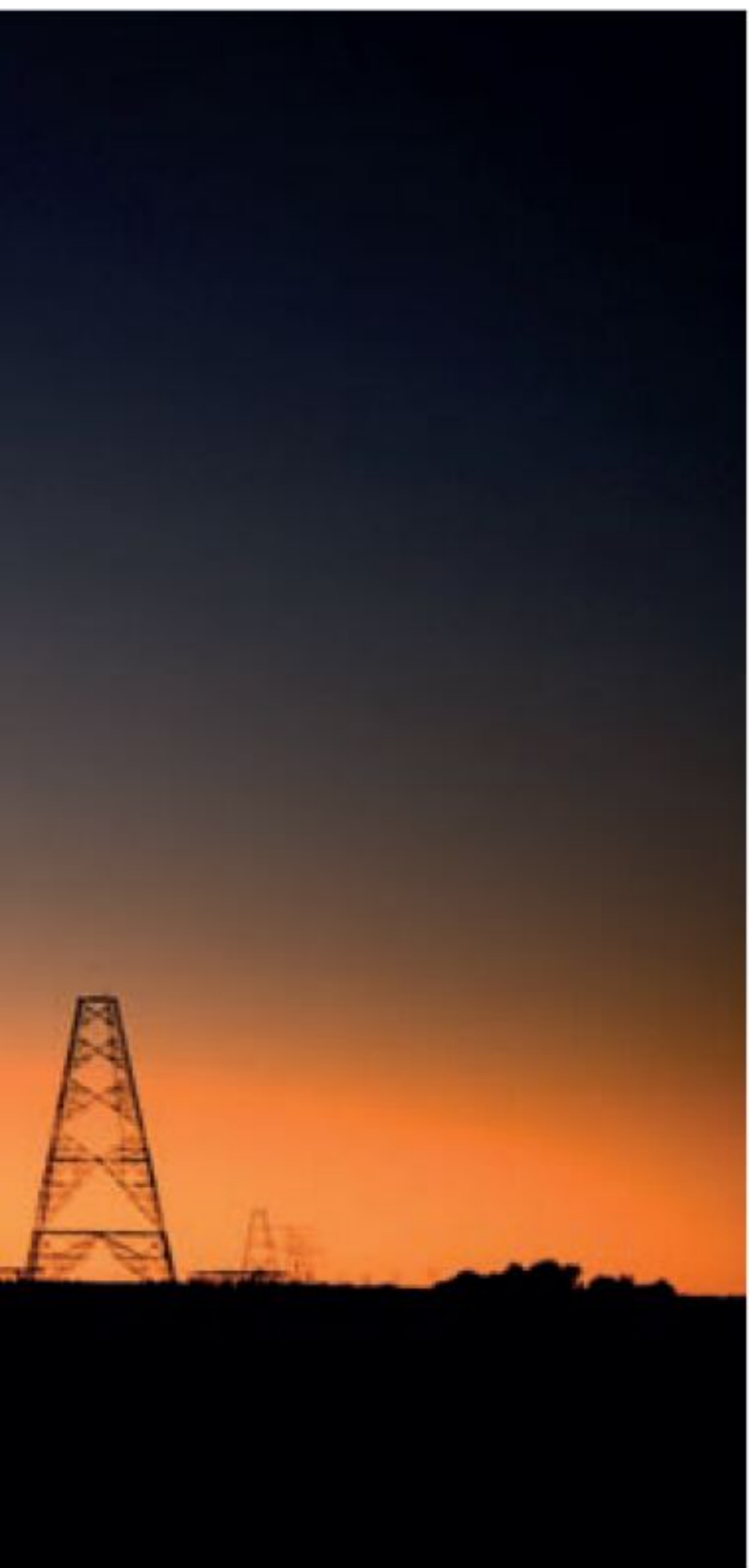
15 NEIL MCALIEGE THE MECCANO SET



17 KERRY N BUCKLEY ALDEYJARFOSS, ICELAND



18 DAVID SOV STANDOUT



16 PETER HILL TRÆLANÍPA



19 ADRIAN SMARRELLI POWER



20 DARREN WASSELL ONE TREE HILL MAGIC



OVERALL RUNNER UP AND WINNER SEASCAPE CATEGORY VICKI MORITZ

Vicki is a Victoria-based photographer specialising in fine art landscapes, street and travel work. Her work has been exhibited at major venues including the Museum of Australian Photography, Geelong Gallery and the Centre for Contemporary Photography, alongside numerous national and international salons. As of 2026, she has held seven solo and six group exhibitions.

 @vicki_a_moritz

APOSTLES SEA MIST. Vicki Moritz says her winning image was taken on a remarkably fine and cold morning from the Apostles lookout on the Great Ocean Road, Victoria.

“I selected the viewpoint that offered the two stacks known as Gog and Magog to make the best of the morning light on the foreground and the soft sea mist,” she explains.

A tripod and a 7.5 second exposure created the blur in the incoming waves, which beautifully balance the mist above.

Prize: Eizo CG2700S photo editing monitor, WD Professional Pack valued at \$1,500, \$1,500 cash.

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

The sea mist captured in this image from the Great Ocean Road brings a fresh atmosphere and interpretation to a classic Australian scene. Technically the photograph is superb, featuring excellent sharpness and texture throughout. A longer exposure was used to create a contrast between the smooth water, detailed foliage and the jagged edges of limestone stacks. It also contributes to the ethereal feeling of the sea fog which creates a beautiful backdrop for the stacks to stand against. A subtle gap in the shroud reveals a headland further behind the stacks creating a sense of mystery and depth. **Matt Palmer**

I really enjoyed the composition of this image. Keeping the foreground edge in frame and in sharp focus creates a strong sense of presence, as if you're standing right on the clifftop looking out. The colour balance is beautifully handled, and the use of a slow shutter speed introduces a soft, flowing movement that adds a calm, atmospheric quality to the scene. **Petra Leary**



RUNNER-UP GERGO RUGLI

Gergo Rugli is a Sydney-based photographer originally from Hungary. Growing up in a landlocked country, he says his connection to the sea began through stories his grandfather shared with him about distant oceans, dolphins and sharks.

After moving to Australia in 2014, his focus shifted entirely to the ocean, and since then, he says he has spent much of his time in and around the water, photographing seascapes and marine life.

He describes his hope for his work is that it will help people see the ocean with different eyes and encourage greater awareness of how important and fragile this ecosystem is.

 @rugligeri

RAGING EMBER. Gergo captured his seascape category runner-up image *Raging Ember* at Bronte Beach in July 2024 on a grey, stormy winter afternoon.

“I was walking along the beach, and as I reached the cliffs above the shoreline, I noticed a narrow opening on the horizon and a soft yellow light beginning to illuminate the dark storm clouds. I immediately felt this would turn into a rare and dramatic sunset,” he recalls.

“The beach was empty, and clean four-to-five-foot waves were rolling steadily toward the shore. I ran back to my car, grabbed my camera, and jumped into the ocean. I swam further out from the shore to capture the full scale of the glowing skyline behind the rising waves.”

“There is something very peaceful about being surrounded by the ocean in those moments, especially when the light turns deep red and the coastline transforms. I hope I can pass on the same feeling of calm, wonder, and connection with nature to others.”

Prize: \$500 cash, \$150 Camera House gift card.

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

While most of us have the habit of photographing sunrises and sunsets as we look out over water, Gergo Rugli’s *Raging Ember* image has us looking across the back of a breaking wave, and back at a community. In between the raging red sky and its reflection on the rough, momentary surface of this wave we can see a slither of land, trees and houses, and a reminder that many Australians literally live on the edge of this continent.

Anthony McKee

What really draws me to this image is the striking colour in the sky. It creates such a powerful atmosphere, and the highlights on the water catch just enough light to add texture and movement, which makes the whole scene feel alive. Everything draws you inward, from the shape of the wave to the glow on the horizon, creating a really immersive experience that is hard to look away from. **Steph Vella**

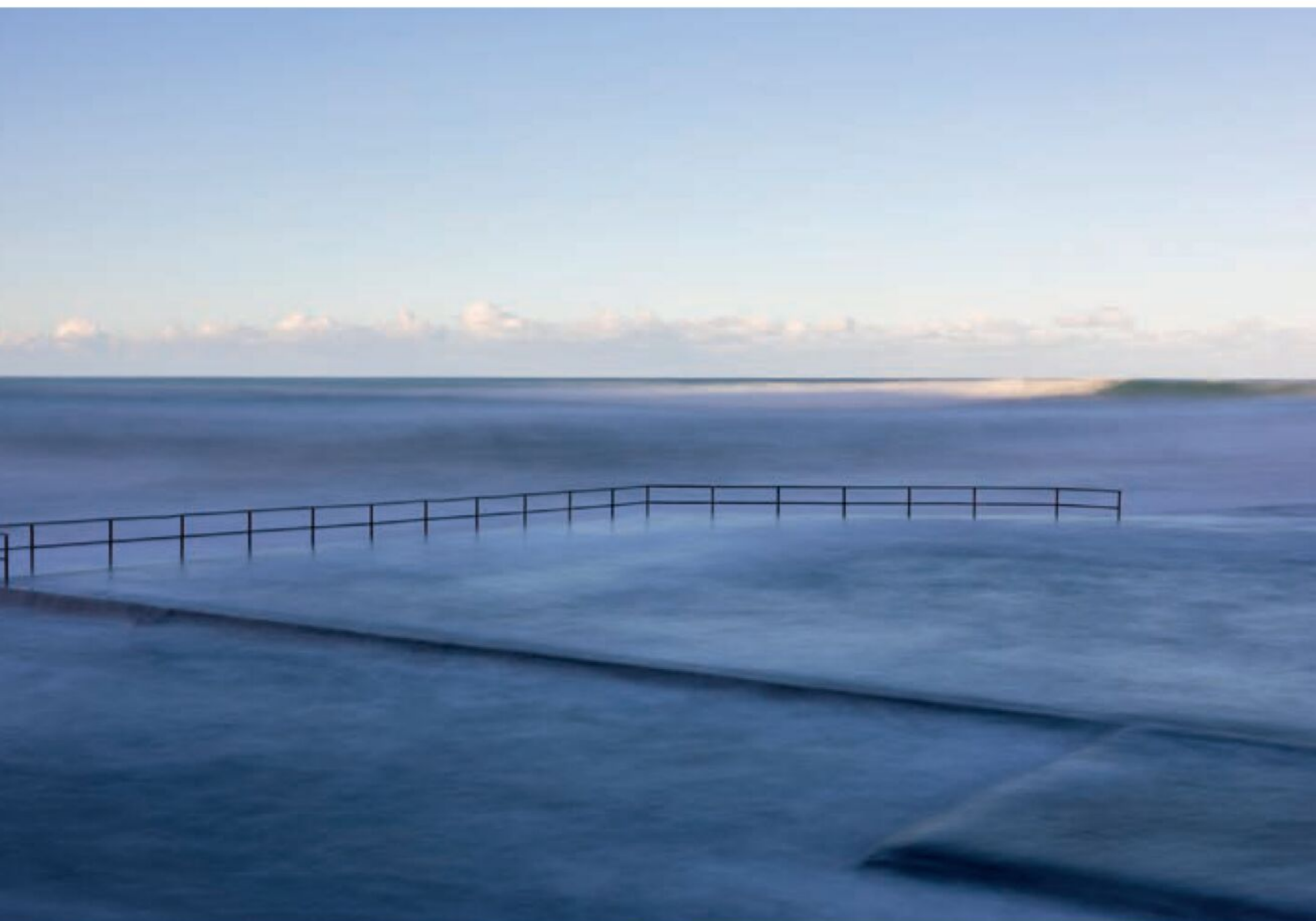




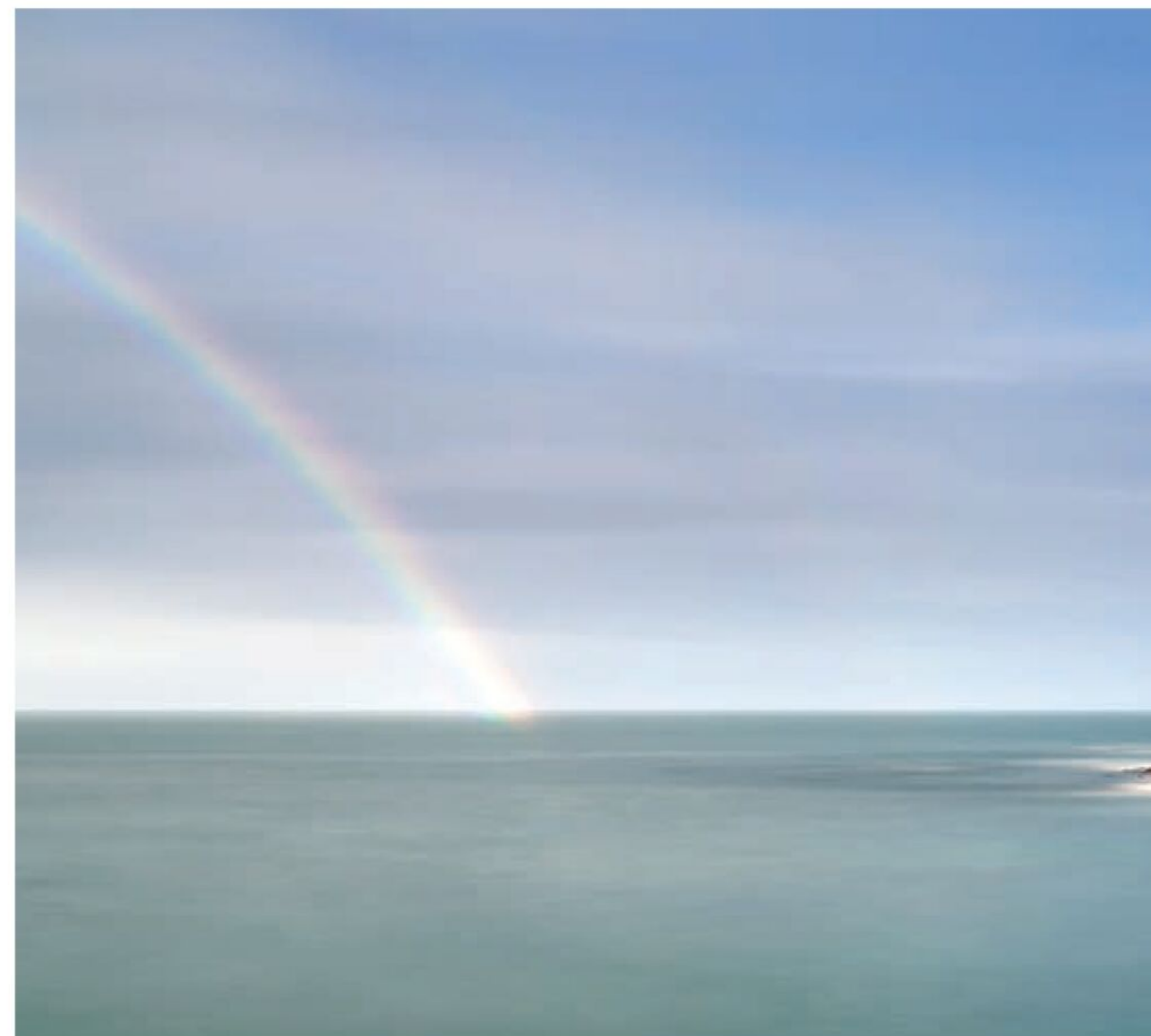
3 CRYSTAL MAY DISSOLVE



4 WAYNE RILEY STONE AND STARS



6 IAN GELLING COLEDALE OCEAN POOL



7 GLENN WALKER OBLIVIOUS



5 BENJAMIN KNIGHT STORMSCAPE



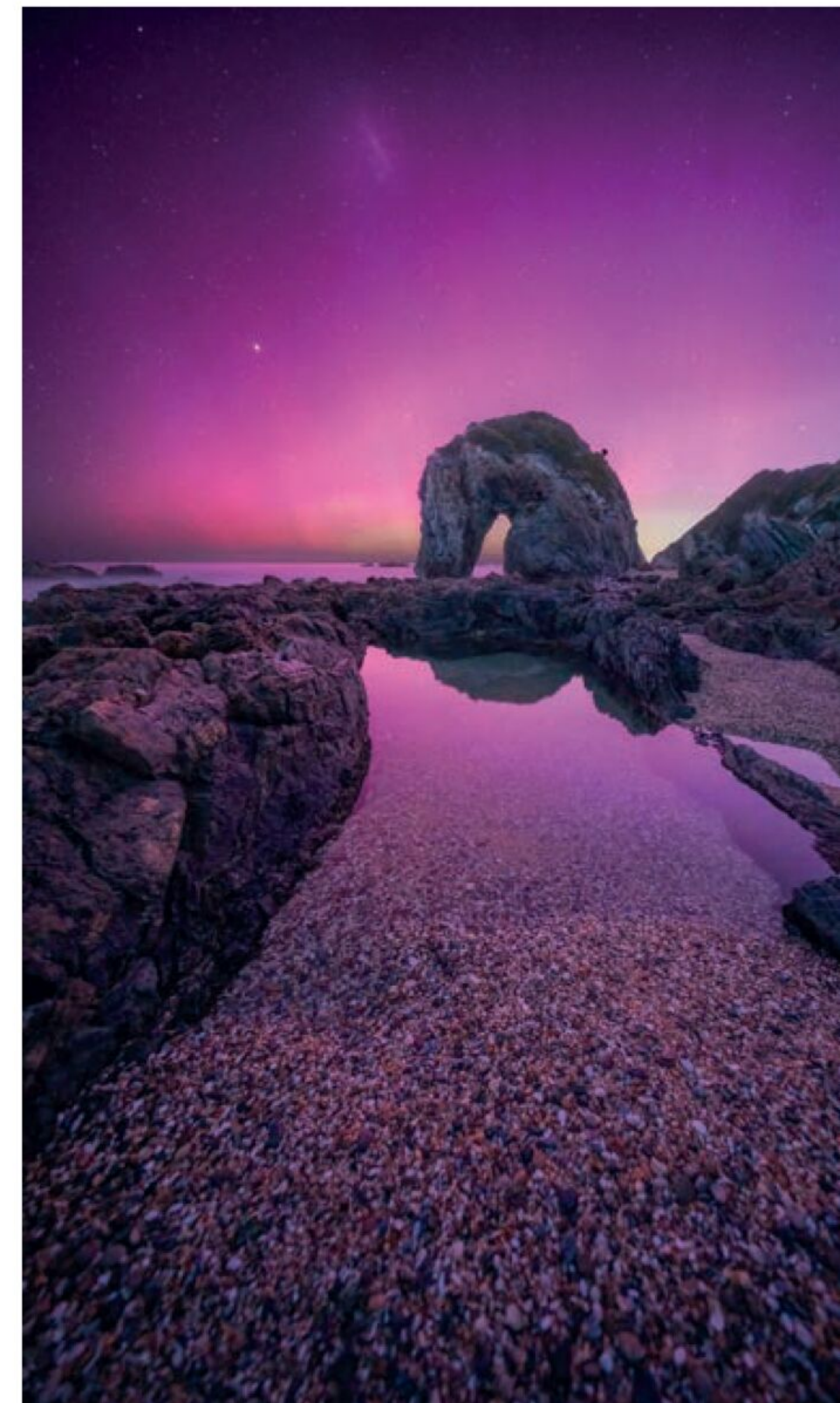
8 TYSON WALDRON SUNSET STORM



9 CRYSTAL MAY SEA-LEVEL III



12 GRANT FAULKNER PRIME REAL ESTATE



13 SAMUEL MARKHAM SPIRIT IN THE SKY



10 LUKE RASMUSSEN FALLEN BEAUTY



11 PETRA MATTHEWS POINT LOBOS STATE NATURAL RESERVE



14 HAYDEN WILLIAMS WHITE ROCK STORM



15 GERGO RUGLI DAVID AND GOLIATH



16 JASON PERRY THE PINNACLES



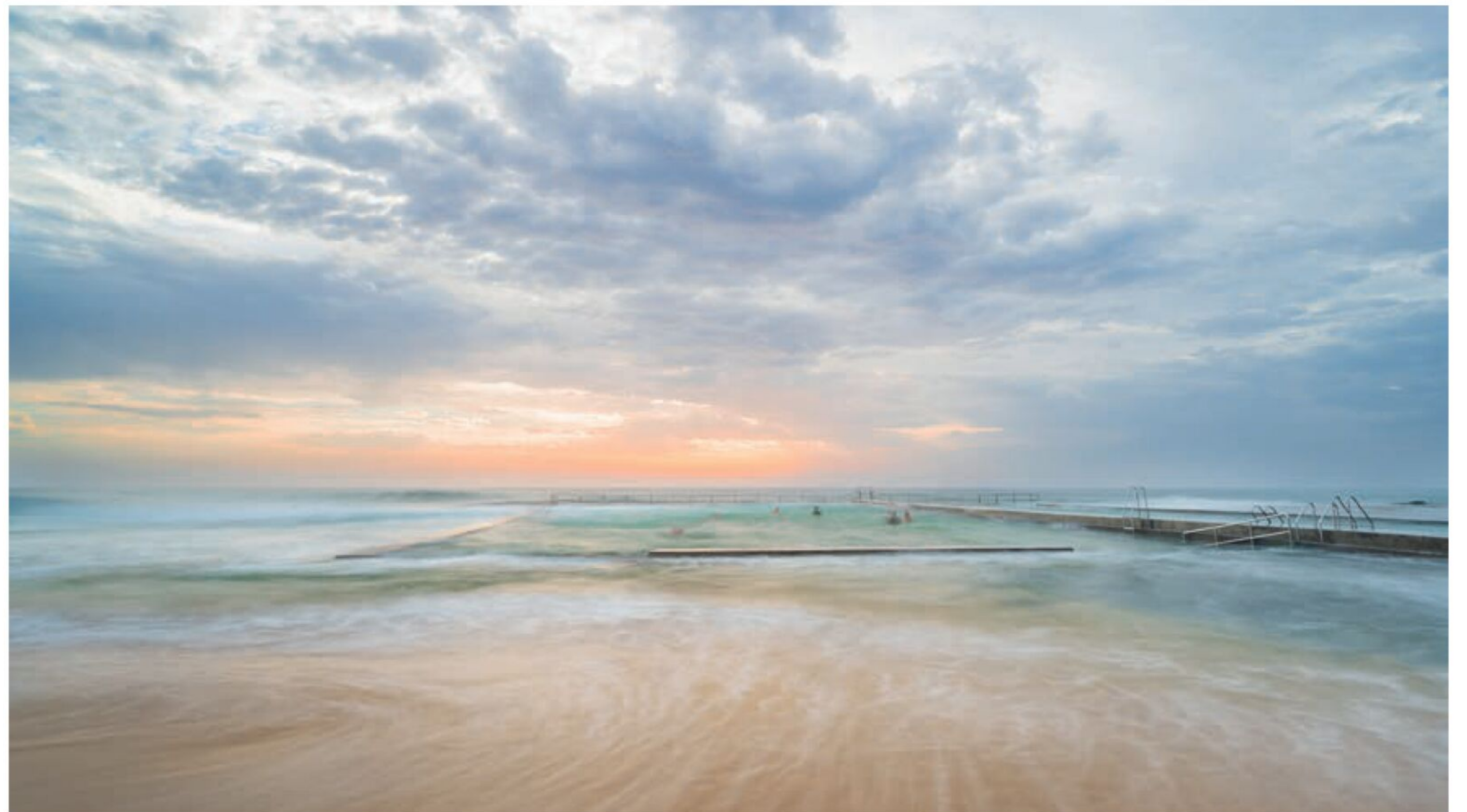
18 GERGO RUGLI THE EARTHSHAKER



19 MEGHAN MALONEY DESERT ICEBERG



17 SIMON RAY MEREWETHER OCEAN BATHS



20 DONNA DICKSON SLOW AUSTI MORNING



WINNER PAUL HOELEN

Based in the beautiful, wild island of Tasmania, Paul Hoelen is a full-time professional photographer working across portrait, travel, documentary and commercial fields. He is best known however for his landscape imagery, particularly from an aerial perspective.

 @paulhoelen

GHOST TREES. Paul Hoelen's Aerial category winning image *Ghost Trees* withholds a clear sense of scale or context, and yet captivated our judges with its subtle shifts in tone and texture that reward a closer look.

"It becomes less about what is seen, and more about how it is felt, or what it represents – an invitation to engage with intuition more than intellect alone," Paul says.

Prize: WD Professional Pack valued at \$1,500, \$1,500 cash.

WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

Paul Hoelen's *Ghost Trees* image is a mysterious abstraction that leaves both the viewers and judges quietly wondering what we are really looking at. At a guess we are seeing black sands being sculpted by tidal movements to reveal lighter sands beneath, but in the process creating the illusions of a treescape against a starry sky, or a mollusc edging its way across asphalt. Whatever it is we are looking at, it caught our attention and it is a very deserving winner in the Aerial category. **Anthony McKee**

I liked the clever use of perspective in this image. At first glance, it looks like a stand of upright trees, but on closer inspection it reveals itself as natural landscape forms seen from above. It's a smart use of top-down photography that plays with perception. **Petra Leary**



RUNNER-UP ROXANNE WESTON

Roxy Weston is a rural photographer with a passion for capturing the raw beauty and honest moments of life in outback Queensland.

Based on a remote cattle station, she describes her work as shaped by the outback – early mornings, red dust, and the stories found in country communities.

 @rlrphotography_

THE CHANNEL COUNTRY. Roxanne Weston's image was captured just before first light in July 2025, following the catastrophic flooding in the region in March of that year.

"I have always been fascinated by the way water and light completely transform the landscape from above, and how the colours and character of the Channels shift from minute to minute depending on the light," she says.

"This landscape holds deep personal significance. I chose this image because it captures a perspective and time of day that few people get to experience. The soft pink tones in the rocks and the restrained colour palette create something both subtle and striking – a moment of quiet beauty I'm proud to share."

Prize: \$500 cash, \$150 Camera House gift card.



WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

Roxanne Weston is a very deserving runner-up in the Aerial category. Her photograph captures seasonal waterways in Queensland coming to life after distant rains begin their flow into the Eyre Basin. What makes this image so beautiful though, is the fractal nature of the work; one main river separating into another flow and then another. Add to this the vibrant colours and you have a work that deserves to be printed big and enjoyed for a long time. **Anthony McKee**

This image captures the extraordinary transformation of Australia's Channel Country, where water reshapes an otherwise arid landscape into a living, breathing tapestry of colour and texture. Seen from above, the braided channels spread like veins across the land, creating intricate patterns blurring the line between aerial landscape and fine art. A truly beautiful abstract. **Ignacio Palacios**



3 JESSO COLEMAN COCONUT WELLS



4 TONY HEWITT TECTONIC 3



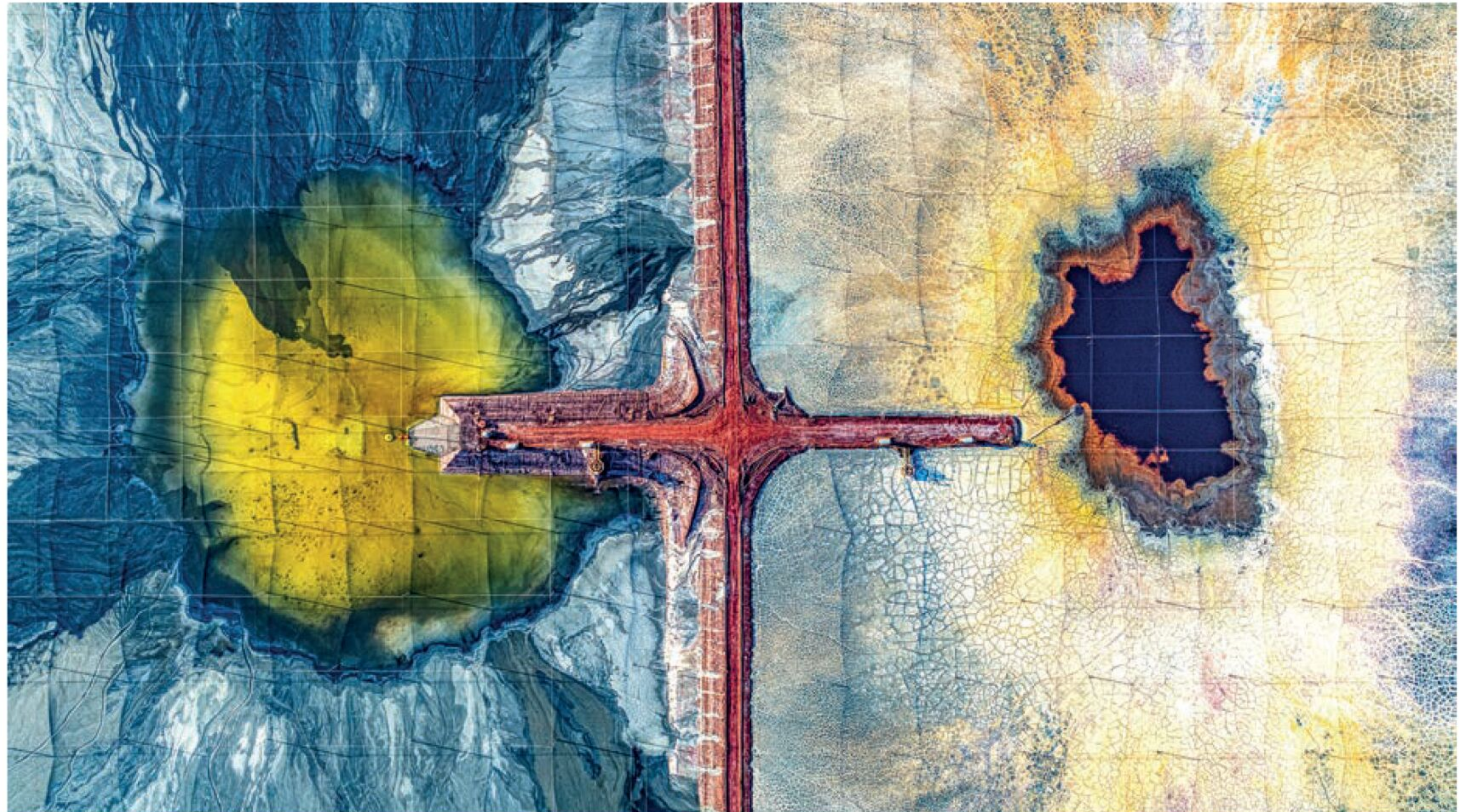
6 JESSO COLEMAN KING RIVER



7 ARTHUR VAY NOT ONE ESCAPES



5 LINGLING GUAN TIDAL CALLIGRAPHY



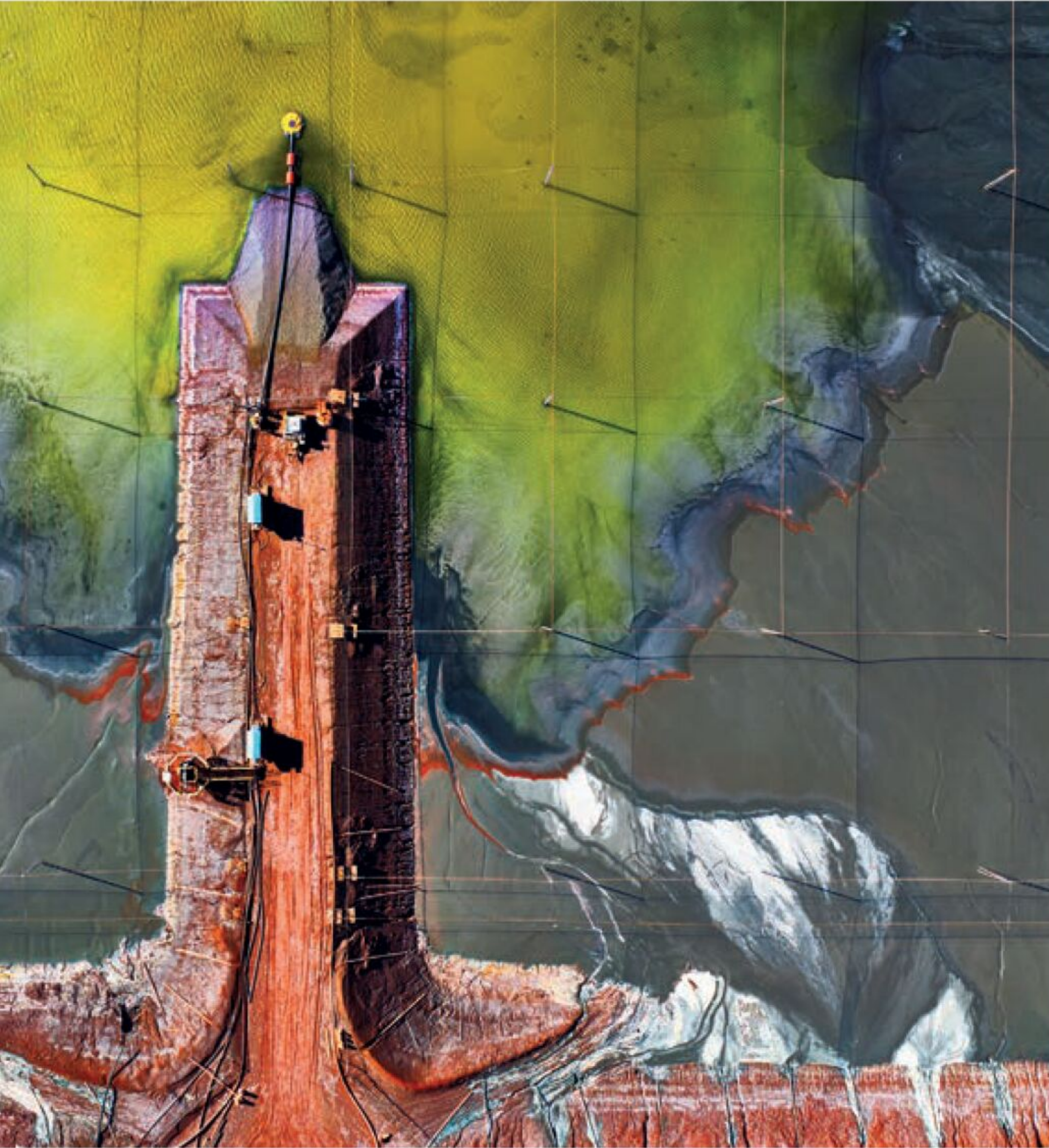
8 ALAN BOYD TWO SIDES TO THE STORY



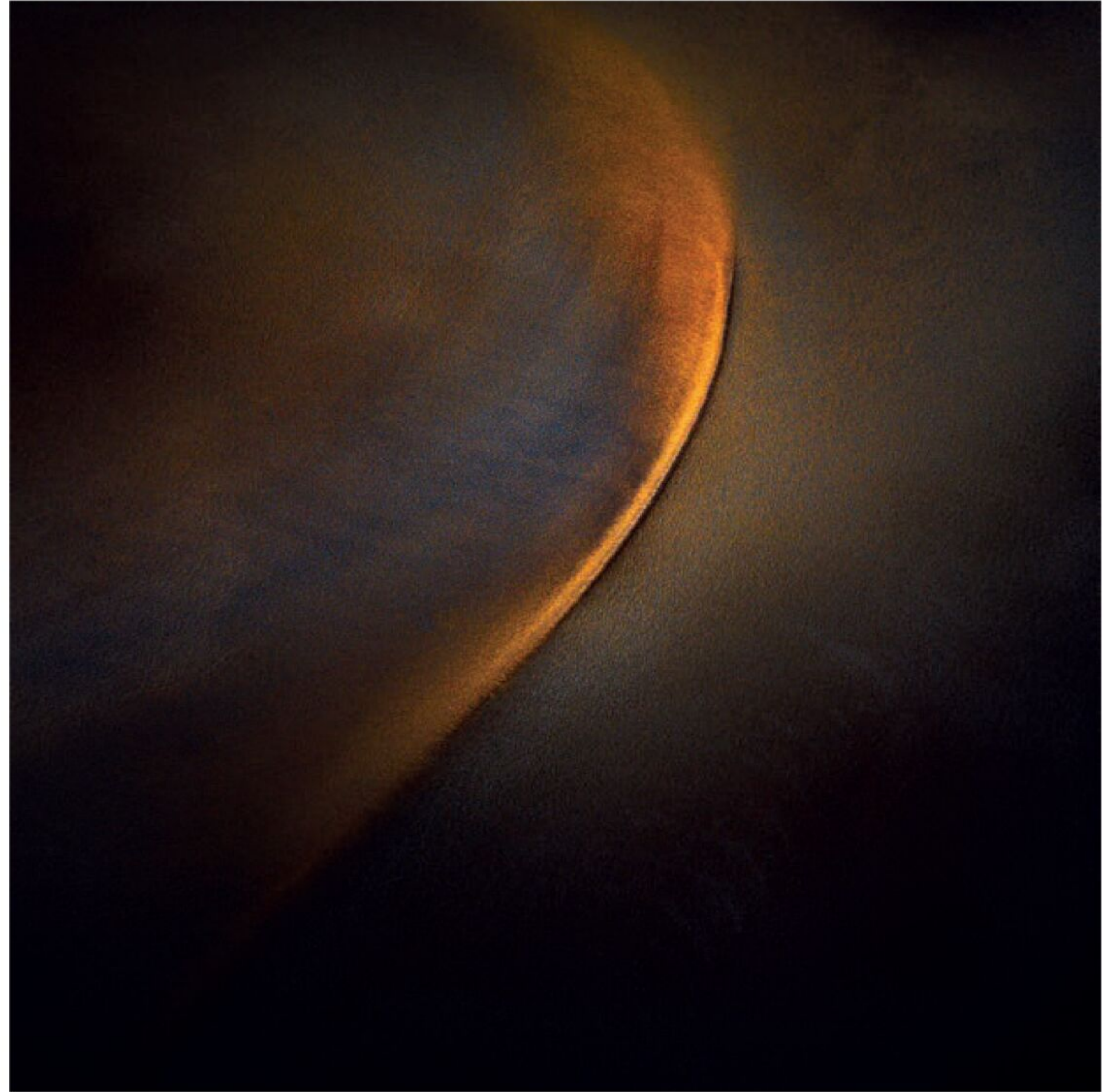
9 MARK GRAY SWARM



12 ARTHUR VAY THE RIGHT PATH



10 MARK GRAY BONSAI



11 TONY HEWITT ARCUS



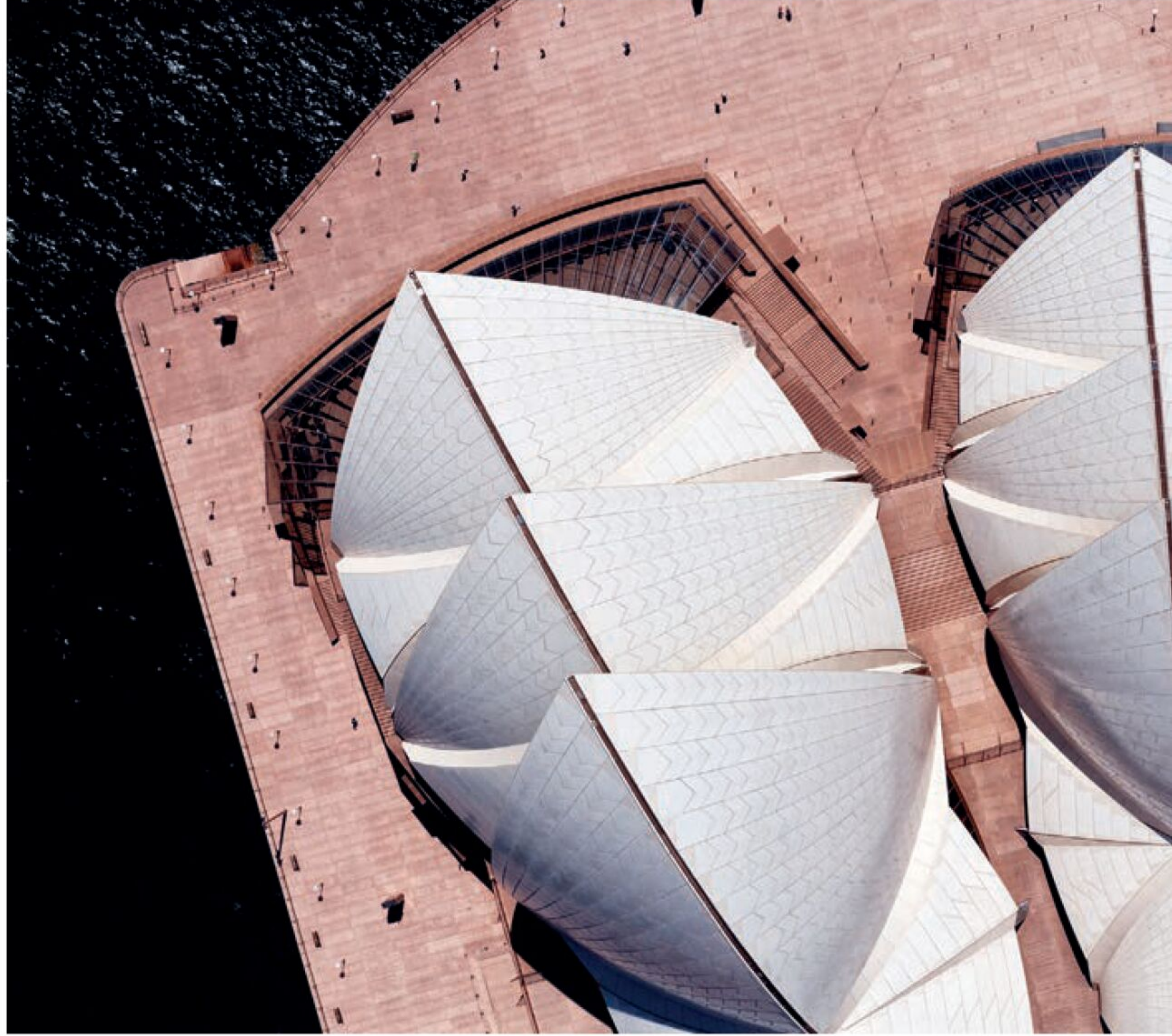
13 ROBERT HOWARD THE SCRAMBLE



14 STEVEN FARAH SKELETAL



15 ADRIAN SMARRELLI TREPTOWER



16 DAVID DIEHM AERIAL ICON



18 COLBY JAMES DESCENDING DRAGONS



17 GLEN PARKER VALLEY MAGNIFICENCE1



19 DANI WATSON DESERT CELL



20 JULIE KENNY TIDAL TREE

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WINNER LEVIN BARRETT

After a short period of B&W film photography in his youth, in 2010 Levin Barrett says he purchased one of those ‘new fancy digital cameras’.

“I dragged myself into the modern era by learning various processing programs but also quickly realised I loved the blend of the technical and the artistic,” says the Melbourne-based photographer.

Today, he says his interests lie in landscape, seascape, astro and time lapse photography, with a little urban photography for good measure.

 @rareview.photography

101. “This image came about because my real job required me to work for three months in Melbourne city,” explains Levin.

“After a few weeks I began to notice some of the amazing buildings I was passing. With a planned early finish one day, I hit the streets with my camera.”

“After an hour, I walked into this building in Collins Street and was hit by the massive foyer and cleverly created interior by the designer. The series of disks that arced over the reception desk reminded me of the phases of the moon and were reflected on the floor. The receptionist adds balance and drives home the scale of the foyer. I realised it was critical to capture the symmetry of the scene and B&W added to the simplicity of the image.”

Prize: WD Professional Pack valued at \$1,500, \$1,500 cash.



WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

The creative use of symmetry is what I love most about this picture. The mirrored geometric reflection on the floor transforms the otherwise static lobby space. I like how the round wall installations resemble the different phases of the moon. By stripping away the distraction of colour, the textural contrast between the wall and the foreground stands out. Meanwhile, the lone figure in the centre of the arc invites me to reflect upon how grandiose human ambitions can be. Absolutely stunning.

Serena Ho

I thought this photograph offered a refreshing take on urban imagery. Its simplicity, combined with a striking use of symmetry and reflection, is what stood out most. The choice of black and white works beautifully, enhancing the contrast and giving the image a bold, graphic quality.

Petra Leary

The strong sense of composition and symmetry is perfectly balanced. The black and white enhances yet simplifies the scene and allows the shapes, contrast and light to take focus. The reflection on the floor adds another layer, softly guiding your eye around the frame. There is a calm, minimal quality to it, but all the elements come together in a way that keeps you engaged and taking it all in.

Steph Vella



RUNNER-UP DREW BUCKMASTER

With over 30 years as a graphic designer and also a keen amateur photographer, Drew Buckmaster is better placed than most to explore Sydney's vibrant tapestry through his viewfinder.

The specialist black and white photographer says he strives to balance beauty with tonal simplicity, creating resonant images that capture the city's essence with a designer's eye.

 @mrmahootle

SPIRAL STAIRCASE. "The UTS building's architecture is stunning," says Drew Buckmaster. "I love how the steel, glass, and wood tones translate into black and white."

"The helix staircase is a personal favourite to photograph; its sharp angles and flowing shapes create a striking visual rhythm."

Prize: \$500 cash, \$150 Camera House gift card.



WHAT THE JUDGES SAID

This image transforms a functional architectural element into something almost hypnotic, drawing the viewer into the elegant geometry of a spiral that seems to have no beginning or end. The staircase reflects a design inspired by a double helix structure, echoing the form of DNA and symbolising movement, growth, and connection. The conversion to black and white works perfectly.

Ignacio Palacios

While the spiral motif is a familiar trope in architectural photography, the tonal minimalism and clean, sweeping gradients captured by Drew help this image to move past being just a staircase. Rather, it becomes a study in abstraction, demonstrating the beauty of form over function. This image stands out for its quiet, albeit classic, execution of mathematical harmony. **Serena Ho**



3 DANI WATSON UNDER CHARGE



4 ADAM RICHMOND FLY HIGH



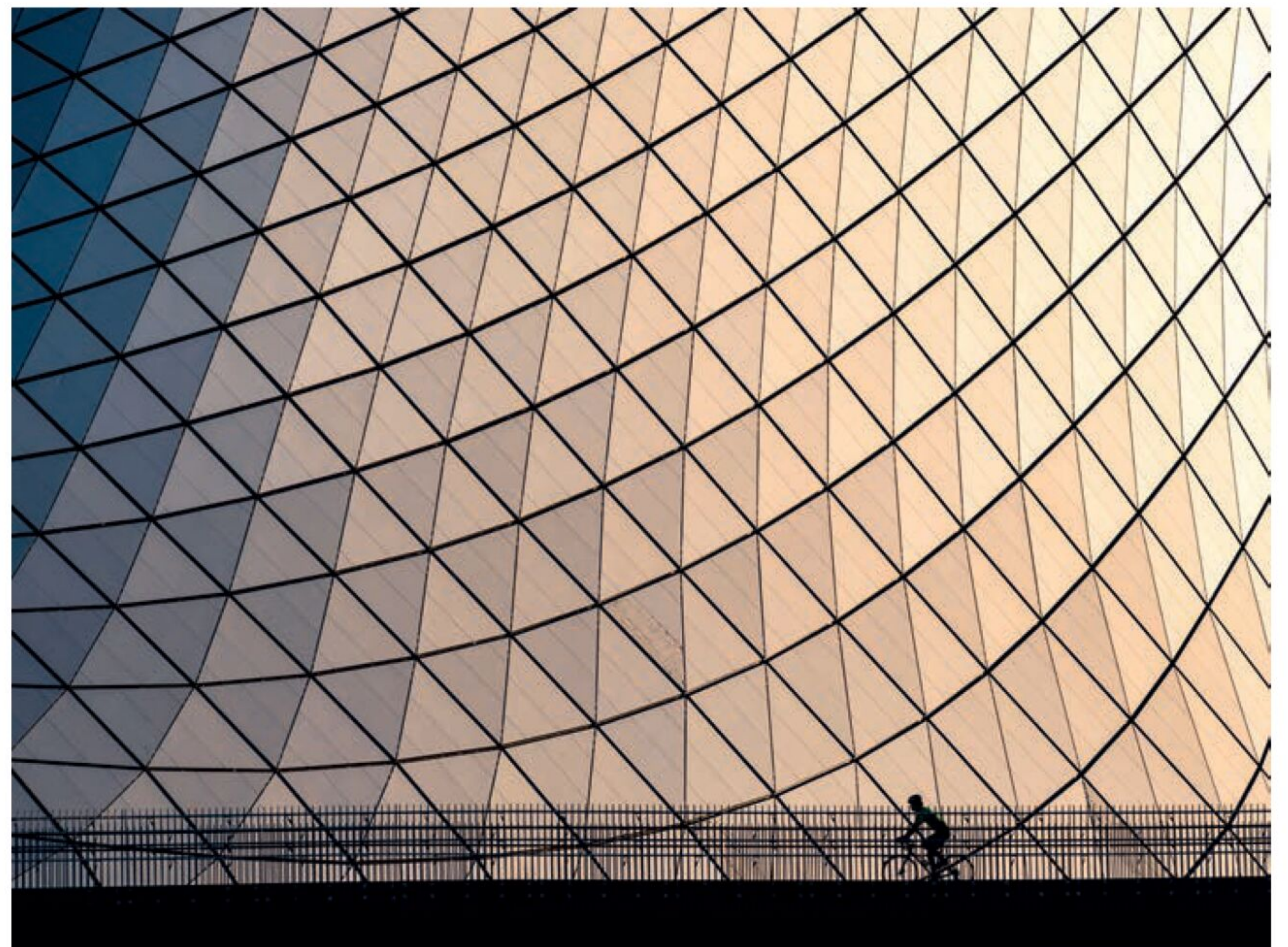
6 JOANNE COSTANZO HARBOUR RUN



7 SONJA BELLA HARMONY



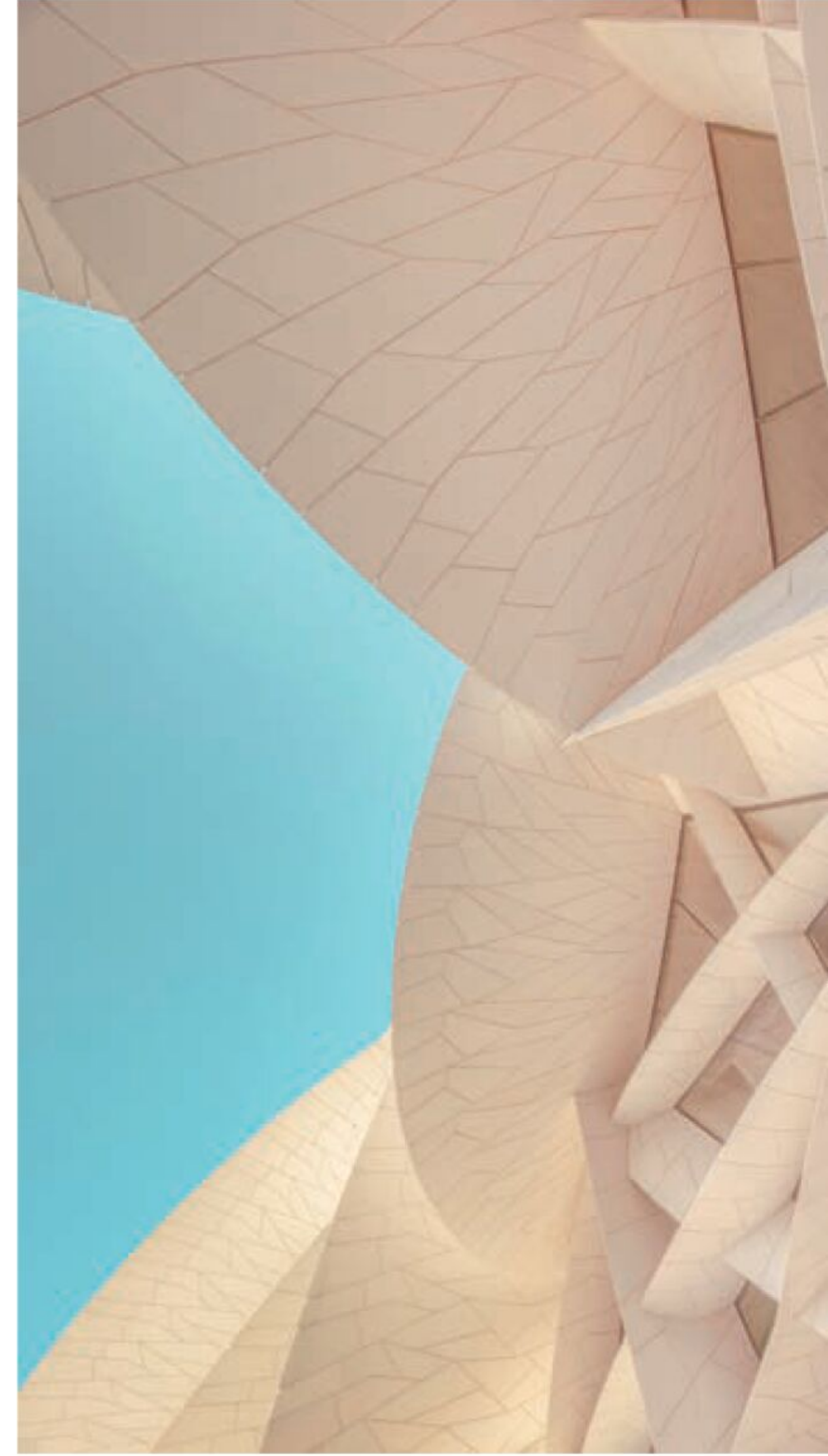
5 SIMON RAY NEWCASTLE OCEAN BATH



8 JANUSZ MOLINSKI SILHOUETTE OF A CYCLIST AGAINST THE WESTGATE TUNNEL VENTILATION TOWER



9 PAUL COLLIS AS THE CITY MOVES ON



10 KIM TALENTO DESERT GEOMETRY



12 CAROL MULLER MILLER STREET SOUTH ESCALATORS, VICTORIA CROSS STATION





11 SHAZ SPANNENBURG BENT FORM



13 DIANNE GALBRAITH URBAN ABSTRACT



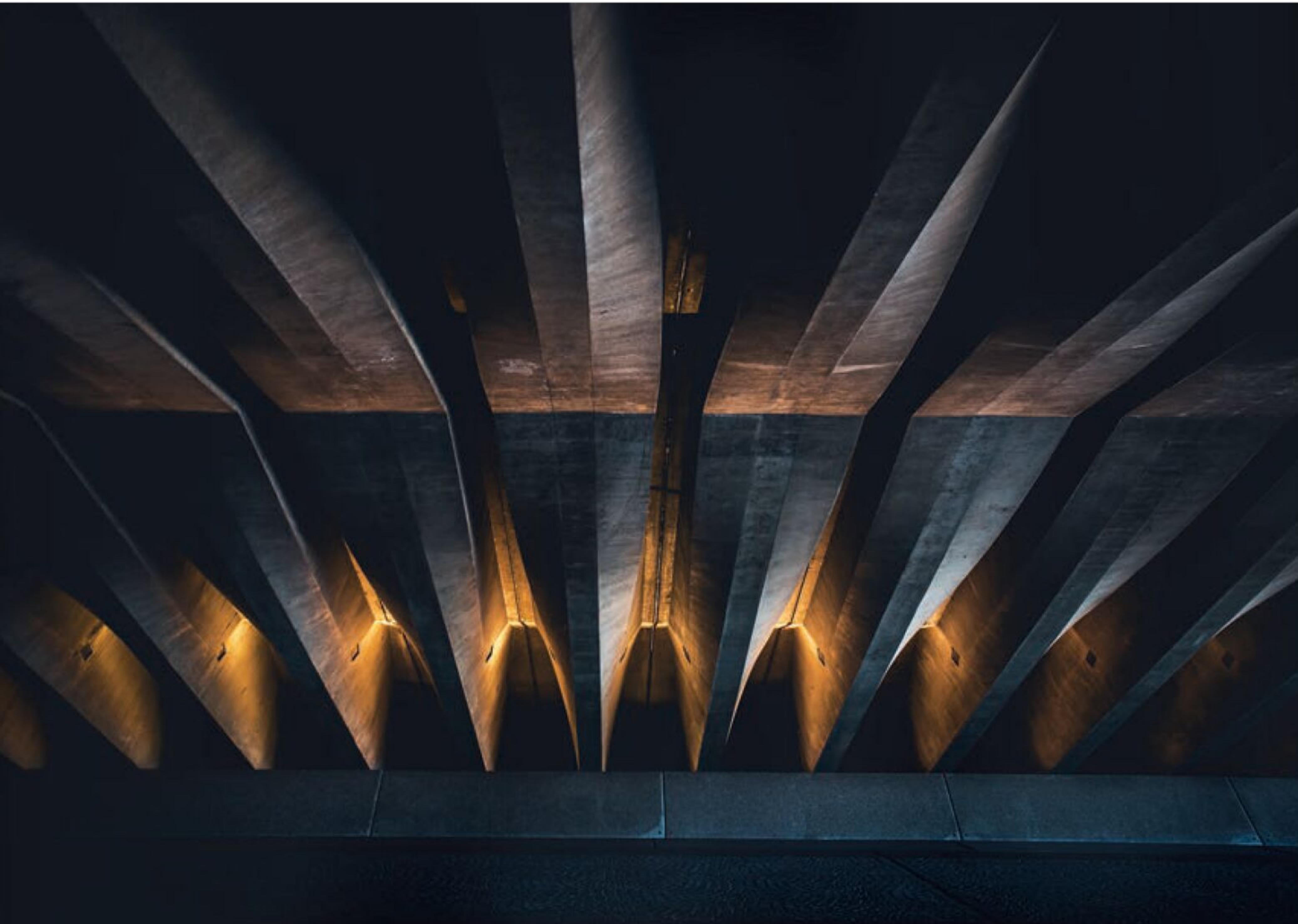
14 JANUSZ MOLINSKI ART DECO COOL AT ANGLESEA



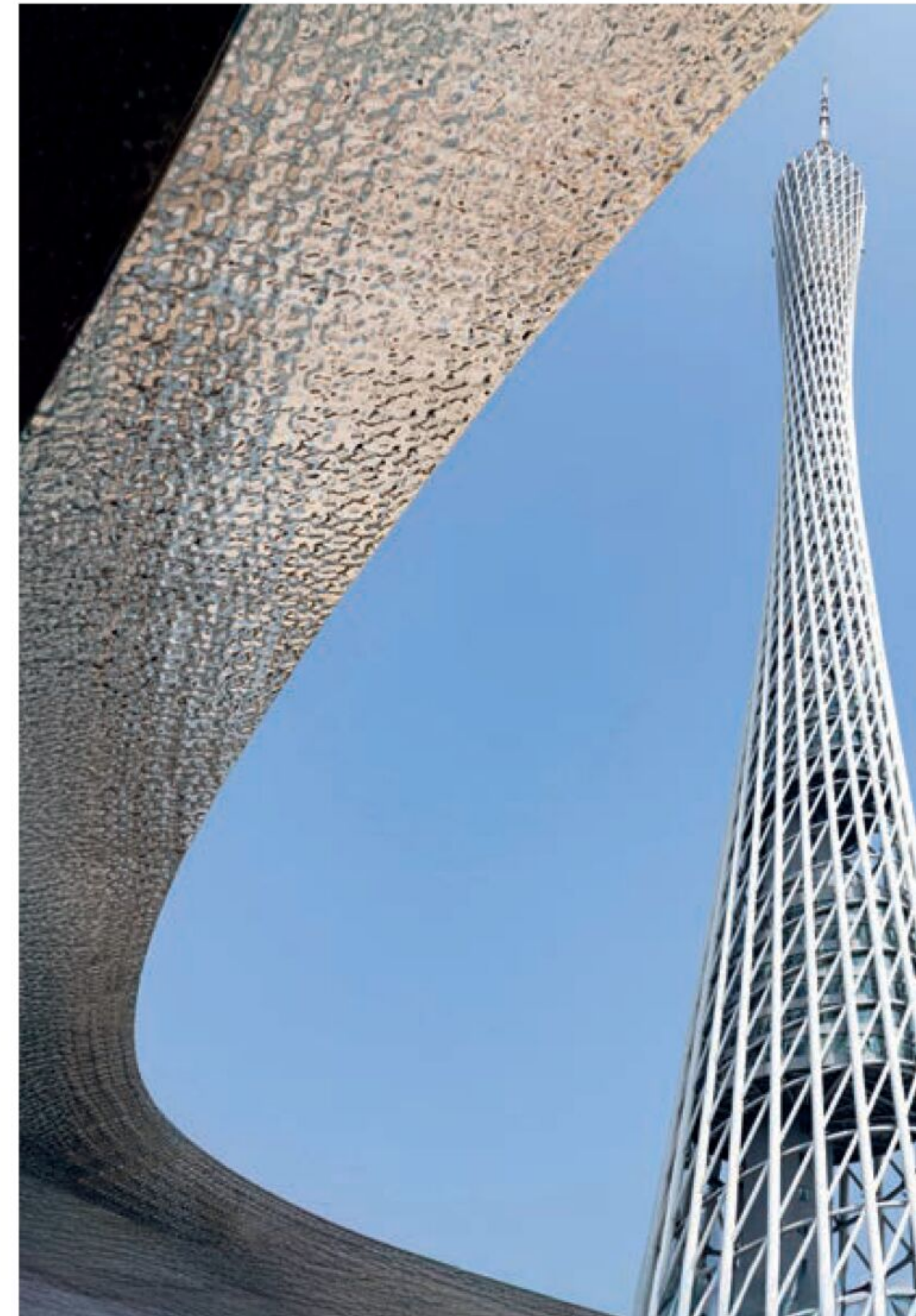
15 **CRAIG FORD** NEON NIGHTS,
TOSHIMA, TOKYO



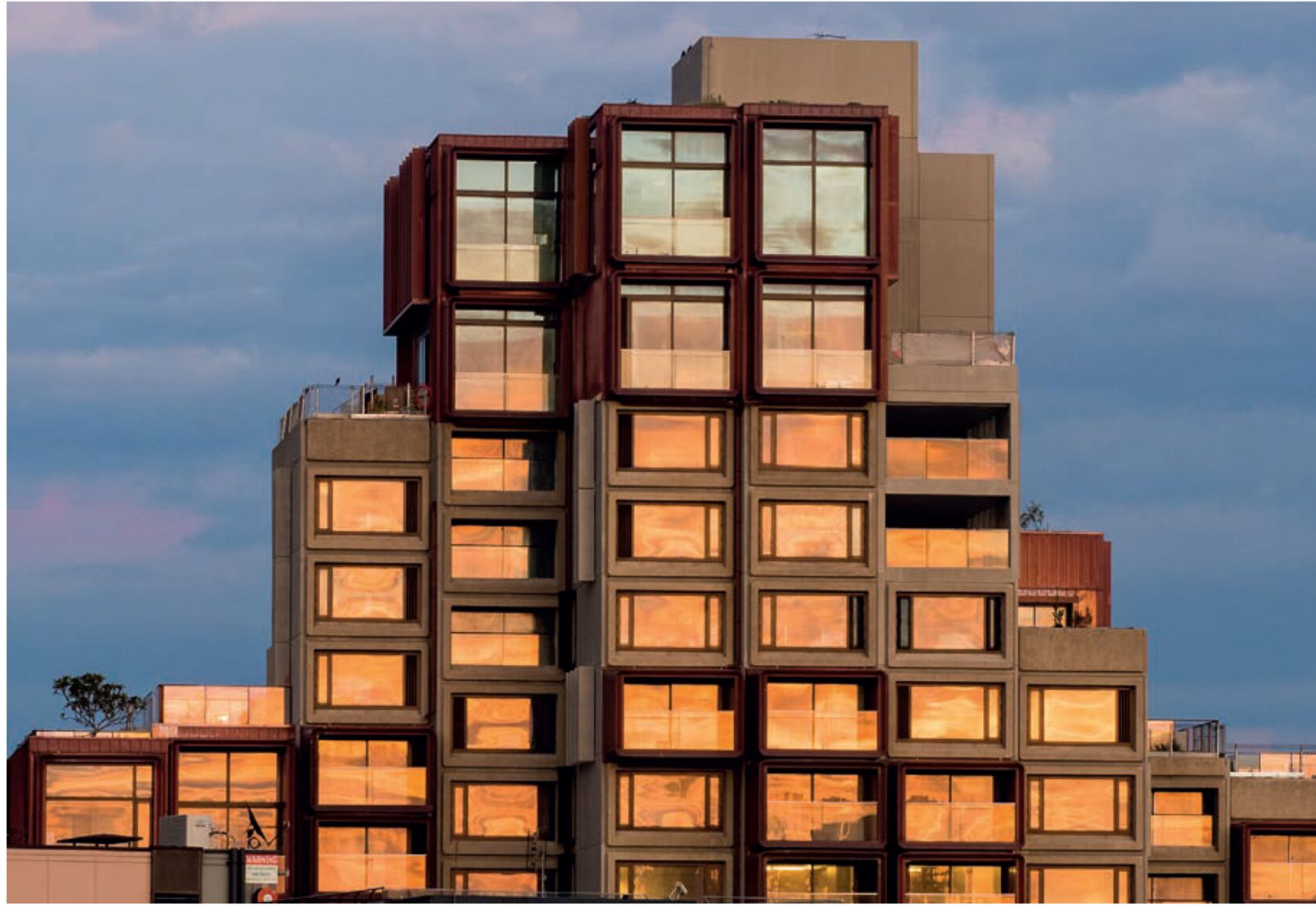
16 **DAVID RICHARDS** WATER TOWER DISTRICT 4



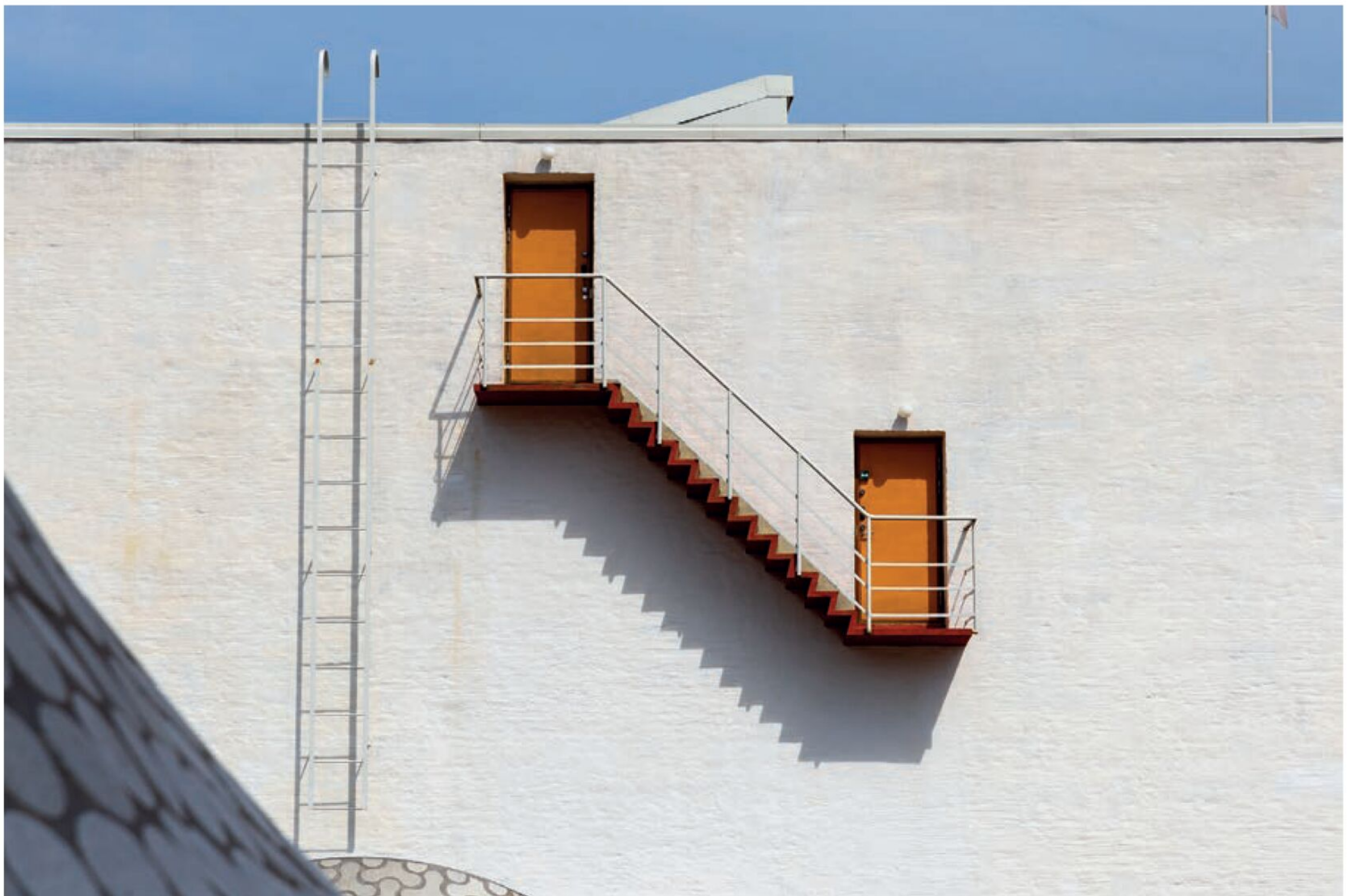
18 **SUE ADORJAN** SYDNEY ARCHITECTURE 2



19 **BYRON TAN** SYMPHONY OF LINES



17 BRAD SMITH LITTLE BOXES



20 DARYL ARIAWAN CONNECTION



THE ART OF LESS

BY RICHARD YOUNG

What does it really mean to make a minimal photograph? Here's how to strip back the landscape to its most essential elements to transform the way you see, and why the lessons of minimalism will stay with you long after you put the camera down.

When people talk about minimal landscape photography, they often refer to it as a genre within the subject or set style. But I think it's so much more than this; it is an art of refining composition down to the simplest elements that still express a complex story.

We often start building a photograph by selecting a subject, defining its presence in the frame—but what if we first defined the presence of the space left, the space in between, the space around? The art of minimalism photography gives importance to space in the frame, the isolation it provides to the subject to present it in a clean, uncluttered photograph, then emphasising serenity and calm of the landscape.

For me, minimalism is more than making simple photographs but is also a state of mind while working in the landscape. It rewards a slower and more thoughtful approach—giving real thought to what we are really trying to say with a photograph, rather than trying to capture the landscape in its entirety.

Lots of people think minimalism is best achieved by the isolation of one subject held within a floating frame of negative space. It's true, this approach will make a minimal photograph, but you have to be careful not to make a simple photograph with little else to say.

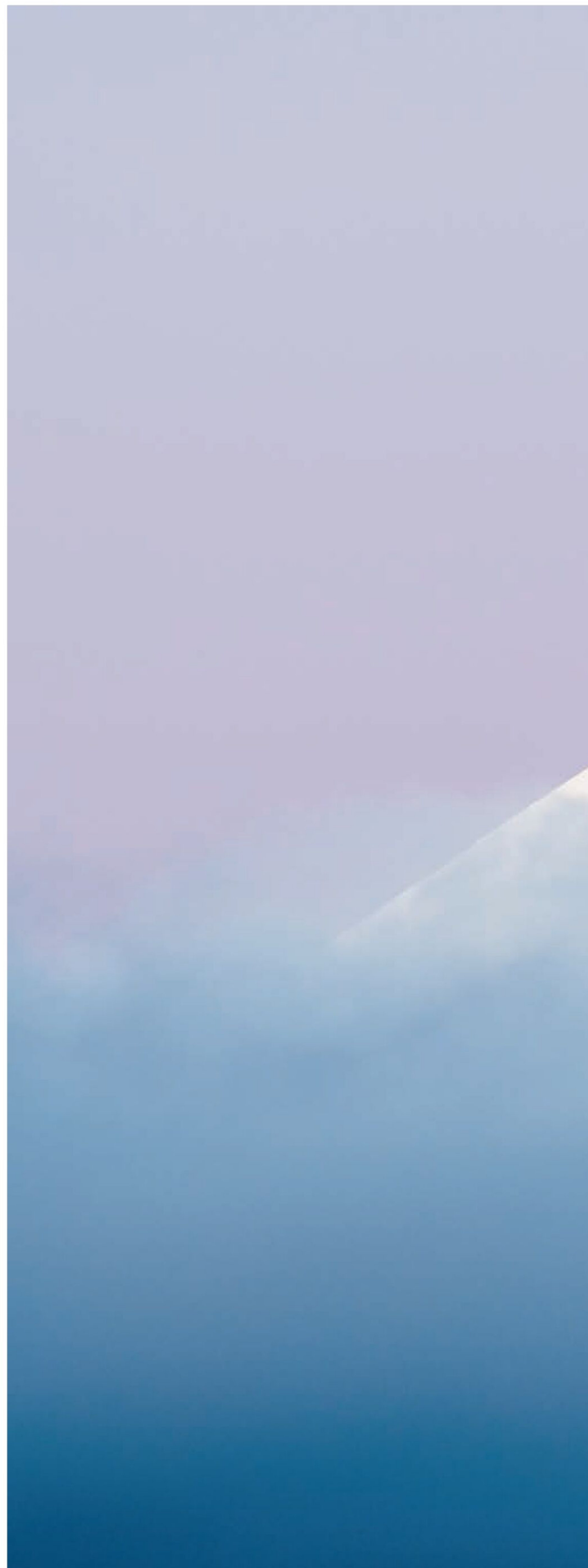




PHOTO TIPS: LANDSCAPE MINIMALISM



Mount Ngāuruhoe, Tongariro National Park, New Zealand. The peak rises above a sea of cloud, isolating it from its base and giving it the appearance of floating within the sky, framed by the soft pastel tones of sunrise. Nikon D800E, Nikkor 70–300mm lens @ 300mm. 0.4s @ f11, ISO 100.



PHOTO TIPS: LANDSCAPE MINIMALISM

When you work with a second or a third element in the frame, this is when you can create a photograph that allows you the tools to communicate something deeper. We can start to speak by using the space between the elements, the way they each talk to each other inside the frame.

The greatest minimalist photographs will have more than can be seen in just a quick impression; they will welcome you back for a second study. Even if you do not wish to be a minimalist photographer, you can still learn so much by approaching the building of a photograph by stripping down the landscape to its most essential elements—the ones that matter to you, the ones you wish to communicate to the viewer—leaving out anything that does not add to the message you are trying to convey.

I live in New Zealand, a country famed for its untamed wilderness, and my local landscapes are some of the most visually complex anywhere on earth. But that very richness so often makes it incredibly difficult to create photographs that feel clean and uncluttered.

Creating minimal photographs in complex landscapes comes down to the deliberate isolation of a subject and the disciplined removal of everything else. It forces you to think carefully about lens choice and about where you stand to separate your subject from what surrounds it.

A painter has the luxury of choosing what to include; as a photographer, we must choose what to leave out.

Mastering this in New Zealand has taught me that if you can find stillness and simplicity here, you can find it anywhere. And the process of learning to do so will fundamentally change the way you approach every photograph you make.

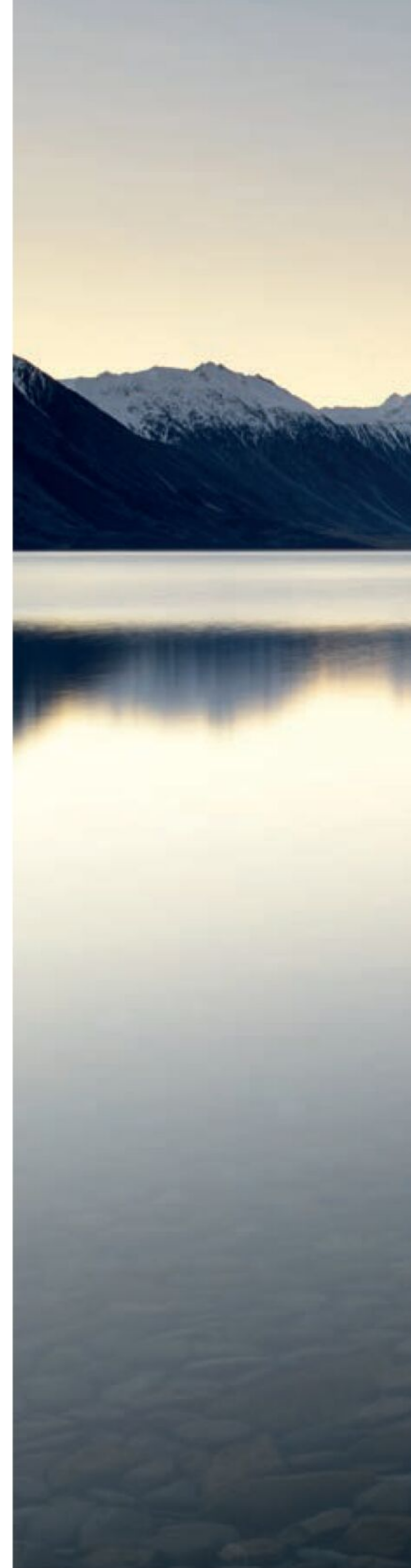
For the past two years, I have been visiting Japan to photograph the minimal beauty of winter in Hokkaido—a landscape blanketed in deep snow, reduced to the most elemental palette of white, grey, and the occasional dark silhouette of a tree.

On the surface, it could not feel more different from the density of a New Zealand landscape that demands that you carve simplicity out of complexity. Hokkaido in winter seems to offer it to you freely; the snow softens everything, erases texture, and wraps the world in a quiet that feels almost sacred.

But here is what I have come to understand: a simple landscape does not automatically make a simple photograph. The very openness of these snowscapes presents its own set of challenges. This is not an untouched wilderness—it is a land crisscrossed with roads, powerlines, barns, and fences, all of which demand careful composition.

And when you reduce a landscape down to so few elements, every single detail carries enormous weight. The placement of a lone tree, the curve of a snow-covered road, a single set of footprints crossing an open field—each becomes the whole story. There is no complexity to hide behind, and no room for distraction.

I think the Japanese understand this philosophy more deeply than anyone. Their relationship with minimalism





CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:

Lake Ohau, Mackenzie Country, New Zealand. The serenity of this peaceful evening is enhanced by a long exposure that smooths the water's surface into a mirror, reflecting the snow-capped peaks above. Nikon D850, Nikkor 18–35mm lens @ 35mm. 20s @ f11, ISO 64.

Central Hokkaido, Japan. A lone snow-laden tree sits peacefully in the winter landscape, in quiet harmony with the snow-covered grasses in the foreground—two simple elements that together tell a complete story. Nikon Z8, Nikkor 24–120mm f4 lens @ 45mm. 1/800s @ f13, ISO 500.

Castle Hill, New Zealand. Bare winter trees emerge from the mist, the landscape reduced to its most elemental tones—a quiet layering of grey and white that strips the scene back to almost nothing. Nikon D850, Nikkor 70–200mm f4 lens @ 112mm. 1/200s @ f11, ISO 64.

Clutha River, Wānaka, New Zealand. Here, morning mist rolling over the Clutha River simplifies the landscape, reducing the scene to just a few quiet elements and allowing the soft shapes of the trees on the far bank to emerge from the fog. Nikon D810, Nikkor 50mm f1.8 lens. 1s @ f11, ISO 64.



extends far beyond photography—it is visually embedded within the landscape in architecture and garden design.

It is an approach to life built on the idea that reducing what you own gives greater importance to each thing you keep, that considered placement creates harmony, and that harmony is only destroyed by tension between objects.

But I also learned to be careful not to confuse minimalism with perfection. When everything is too controlled, a photograph can feel sterile—something generated rather than experienced. It is the imperfections—the slight lean of a snow-laden branch, the uneven edge of a frozen pond—that give a minimal photograph its soul.

So how do you begin to apply these ideas in practice, wherever you happen to be? The first thing I would encourage any photographer to do is resist the instinct to reach for the wide-angle lens. There is something deeply ingrained in landscape photography culture that says a wider lens means a grander photograph.

At the other extreme, a very long telephoto pulled tight around a subject can certainly isolate it, but it can also remove all sense of the surrounding space, which is the very thing that gives a minimalist photograph its power.

The most interesting creative territory often sits between those two extremes. A 50mm, a 70mm, perhaps a 100mm—these focal lengths allow you to be selective about what enters the frame without losing the sense of environment that gives your subject context.



PHOTO TIPS: LANDSCAPE MINIMALISM

SKY AND WATER

In every landscape, no matter how complex, there are two natural canvases that offer simplicity: the sky and water. A sky, especially one that is clear, graduated, or softly overcast, provides an instant area of calm that can anchor even the most cluttered foreground. Water—whether a still lake, a slow river, or the open sea—offers the same gift. Learning to use these natural elements as deliberate background, rather than simply as incidental parts of the scene, is one of the most powerful tools available to the minimalist photographer.



TOP: Taranaki coastline, New Zealand. Two lone rock stacks sit isolated by a long exposure that smooths the sea to a silky plane, the twin forms floating in quiet solitude against a minimal sky. Nikon D810, Nikkor 70–200mm f4 lens @ 112mm. 30s @ f11, ISO 100.

ABOVE: Central Hokkaido, Japan. A lone tree stands in silence amid the deep winter snow, its bare branches reaching skyward against an almost white canvas. Nikon Z8, Nikkor 24–120mm f4 lens @ 85mm. 1/100s @ f11, ISO 500.

RIGHT: West Coast, New Zealand. Converting to black and white simplifies this already minimal landscape further, enhancing the beautiful curve and flow of the stream as it winds toward the sea. Nikon D850, Nikkor 50mm f1.8 lens @ 50mm. 30s @ f11, ISO 64.

Combined with thoughtful positioning—moving closer, stepping back, changing your height, shifting your angle—a mid-range lens gives you more creative control over the balance between subject and space than almost anything else in your kit.

Over years, I've developed a set of practical approaches that help me find and build minimalist images wherever I am. These are not rigid rules, but habits of seeing and working that I return to again and again.

NEGATIVE SPACE

Negative space can be very powerful in a photograph; it allows our subject room to breathe and can help to amplify its presence when displayed against a larger canvas. When working with negative space, we need background elements that will not distract from the main subject—heavy mist, fresh snow, and flat overcast light all work brilliantly, as do coastal landscapes where the sea or an expansive horizon fills the frame. Consider also how you position your subject within that space: a central placement creates stillness and isolation, while shifting toward the edge introduces a sense of movement or a little more tension in the frame.

LENS CHOICE

While wide-angle lenses can produce stunning landscape results, without careful intention they tend to fill the frame with competing elements and leave the image without a clear subject. I find many landscape photographers will seldom reach for a longer lens, and yet this is often the most effective way to simplify a scene. By working in the 70–200mm range, you focus on a smaller area of the landscape, reducing competing elements and giving your subject room to breathe. Longer lenses also compress distance, which can be used creatively—stacking layers of a landscape, or drawing a distant subject forward into elegant relationship with the space around it.

LONG EXPOSURES

Long exposure photography can be an excellent way to help minimise a landscape, especially when working around water. By using longer shutter speeds, we can render out distractions—ripples on the surface, the movement of the sea—and turn these into a smooth, blank canvas. When your main subject is framed against this simple background, it becomes more clearly defined, and the image takes on a calm, meditative quality that is very much in the spirit of minimalism. Long exposures also introduce a sense of time into a still image—the blurred movement of water or sky suggests atmosphere and mood that a single frozen moment cannot, adding an emotional layer that is valuable with so few elements.

USE OF COLOUR

Minimalism is also about the careful use of colour. Colour can make a photograph feel complex even when the composition is simple, with competing hues pulling the



viewer's attention in different directions. A black-and-white photograph has the luxury of removing this entirely, which is why monochrome and minimalism have such a natural affinity—instantly, form and shape do all the work. The colour minimalist has to work harder. A limited, harmonious palette where tones sit close in temperature and saturation allows shape and form to lead without the distraction of strong colour.

AVOIDING DISTRACTIONS

A good composition is determined by what we leave out just as much as by what we include. We can change the viewer's entire reading of a scene by choosing to exclude—those power lines to the right of the frame or the patch of bright light. Even subtle distractions, while not always immediately obvious, can catch the eye in a way that quietly pulls attention from the intended subject—a

stray blade of grass at the bottom of the frame, a small highlight on a background rock. Training yourself to scan the entire frame before pressing the shutter, rather than just checking your subject, is a discipline that takes time but will transform your images.

If you can learn how to create compelling minimalist photographs that have real depth, you will learn the building blocks that define how you communicate your message as a photographer—what you really wish to say and express to the viewer. Minimalism is not just a style. It is a functional understanding of how you compose any photograph, whether you choose to embrace it to create harmony within the frame, or break it to create dynamic tension and power. The lessons it teaches—restraint, patience, deliberate seeing—will stay with you long after you put the camera down. ☼



APS ONE FRAME





MURDER BALL AT ITS BEST



In wheelchair rugby, the first thing you notice is the sound.



WITH PETER JOHN O'BRIEN

Metal slams into metal with explosive force. Wheels collide, lift, twist, sometimes tipping completely. The court fills with impact, speed and intent. Beneath the physicality, though, there is something else: respect, camaraderie and a fierce competitive spirit.

Wheelchair rugby, often called “Murderball”, is not a sport you ease into. It demands full commitment, from the athletes who play it and from the photographer trying to capture it.

Photography came later in my life. As retirement approached, I went looking for something that would challenge both my technical curiosity and creative instincts. What started as a return to a teenage hobby quickly became an obsession. Joining Castle Hill Photography Club in 2013, and later The Entrance Camera Club, opened doors to learning and to seeing, understanding moments before they unfold. Castle Hill also had a long history of photographing disability sports.

That understanding was tested the first time I stood courtside at a wheelchair rugby match.

The game is relentless. Two teams of four compete not just for possession but for space, blocking, trapping and colliding to create a single opening. The ball carrier drives toward the line while teammates give up position and absorb contact to make it happen. Every second is unpredictable. Every movement counts.

You do not simply take a photograph. You anticipate it.

One player stood out early: Josh Nicholson. Even before his selection for the 2024 Paris Paralympics, his presence was clear. He moved with controlled aggression, decisive and purposeful. The rhythm of the game shifted when he entered play.

Later, during the Paralympics, that presence was even more obvious. When Nicholson rolled onto the court against England, the commentator’s tone changed. This was a player who could alter the contest.

This image was made before that moment on the world stage, but the story was already there.

In post, the choice was straightforward. Remove colour and let form, tension and collision carry the image. In black and white, it becomes less about sport and more about confrontation, resilience and human will.

The photograph went on to earn international recognition, winning medals across multiple exhibitions. Closer to home, it was selected by the Federation of Camera Clubs (NSW) for the Australian Interstate Photographic Competition and awarded first place in the monochrome section, the Herbert Medallion.

For me, this image is about the moment where control meets chaos, and the fraction of a second when everything is at stake. 🌐

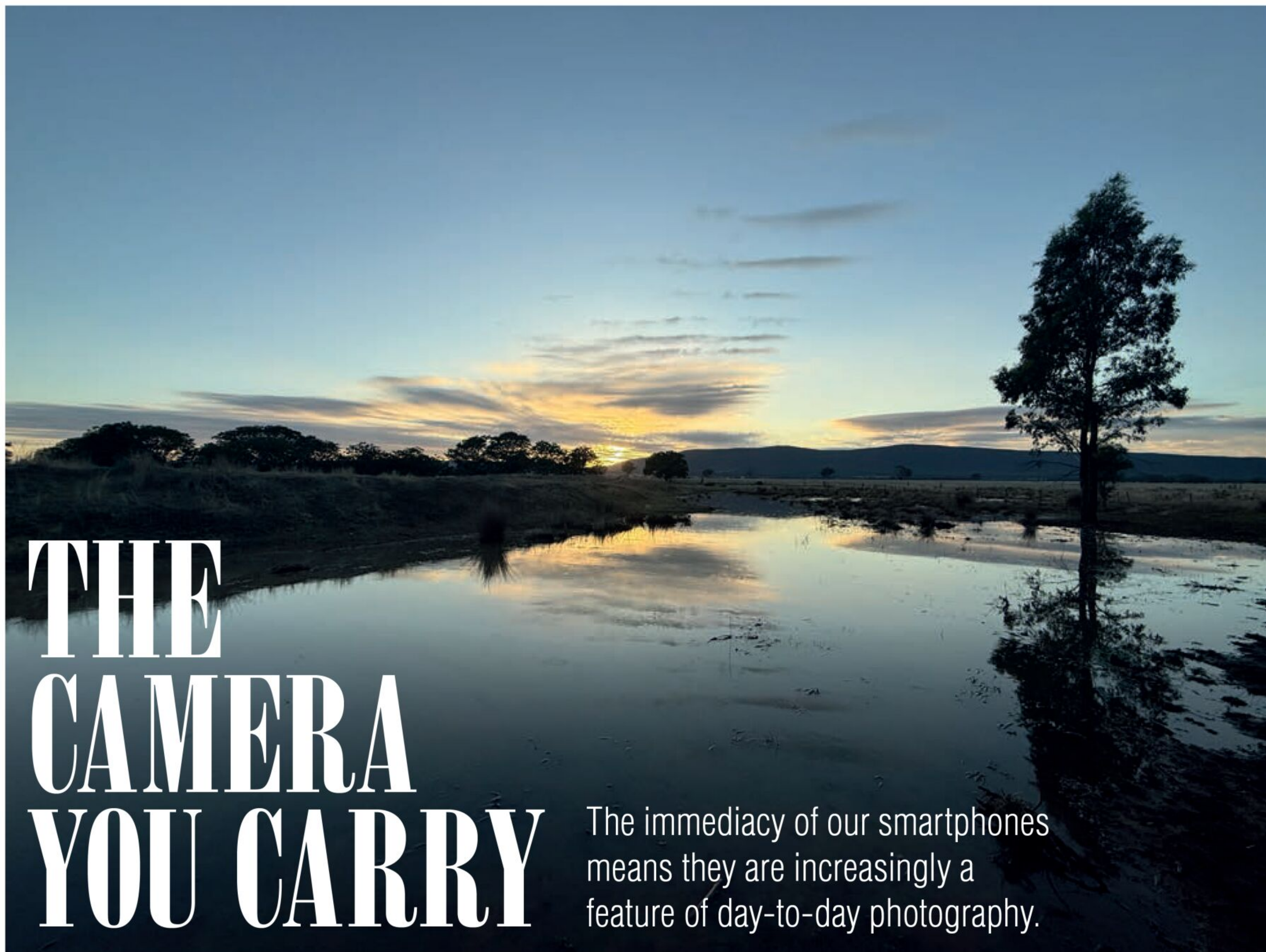
NIKON Z9, NIKKOR S 70–200MM F/2.8 AT 200MM, 1/1000S AT F/2.8, ISO 3200.

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THE CAMERA YOU CARRY

The immediacy of our smartphones means they are increasingly a feature of day-to-day photography.

WITH HELEN CARPENTER



Over the past year, I have noticed a quiet shift in the way I photograph the world around me.

For many years my instinct was to reach for my DSLR, carefully packing lenses and thinking through light, timing, and composition before heading out with the intention of making photographs.

But this year, more often than not, the images I have made have been captured on my iPhone rather than my Nikon DSLR or Canon PowerShot.

Life has been busier, and the opportunities to deliberately set aside time for photography have been fewer. Like many of you out there balancing work, family, and daily responsibilities, photography has had to sit within the ordinary flow of the day.

But what has surprised me most is

how naturally the iPhone has stepped into that space.

It is always there, in my pocket, on the kitchen bench, or in the car. Because of that, it has become the camera that quietly records the small moments that might otherwise pass unnoticed.

In many ways, this has reinforced something central to photography: the value of immediacy. The camera is no longer only a tool for carefully constructed images. It is also a device for responding to what's happening in real time.

With a DSLR, the process can feel at times deliberate and considered. There is preparation involved: selecting lenses, adjusting settings, and slowing down to evaluate the scene. That process is satisfying, but with a phone, the camera opens instantly, and the act of photographing happens almost at the same moment as seeing.

I've noticed that this year my photographs have become less about grand landscapes or formal compositions and

more about fragments of everyday life. Small observations that form a kind of journal of place. Living and working in rural New South Wales, the landscape is a constant presence, and the phone has allowed me to document its details without interrupting the rhythm of the day.

I like that phone photography is unobtrusive and fast, and it tends to favour instinct over perfection. The results often feel less like constructed images and more like remembered moments.

This does not mean the DSLR has lost its place. It remains essential when I am working on specific projects or making images intended for exhibition. The precision it offers is still important.

But the iPhone has become an equally valuable companion, allowing my photography to exist in the spaces between those moments.

Perhaps the simplest truth this year has reinforced is that the best camera is the one you have with you. More importantly, it is the one that allows you to respond before the moment passes. 🌟

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OTEX XT-850 GLOVES

If you've been into photography for a while, you'll know how important comfort is when it comes to extending how long you can be out shooting. And, as I've learned the hard way a few times over the years, small decisions can make the whole experience more enjoyable.



**Australian
Photography
GOLD AWARD**

Cold weather is probably the ultimate challenge when it comes to staying out in the field. I've learned that layering works well for the body, and keeping your head and neck warm makes a noticeable difference. Gloves, though, have always been a bit of a sticking point for me. Thick gloves keep you warm but make it hard to use camera controls, while thinner ones don't offer enough protection. Layering gloves sounds like a solution, but constantly taking them on and off to adjust camera settings can quickly become frustrating.

That's where OTEX's photography-specific gloves come in. Created by Melbourne-based landscape photographer Mark Phillips, the idea was to design something durable and affordable that actually works for photographers. The XT-850 model, priced at \$119.95, builds on earlier versions and has three flip-back fingertips, so you can access buttons and dials without removing the gloves.

IN THE HAND

Build quality is solid, and made up of what's described as a windproof/waterproof ripstop anti-tear spandex, stuffed with 3M Thermal C40 + 120g polyfill that's surrounded by a brushed 'tricot' fleece with wicking capabilities. The gloves are rated down to around -10°C. There's also a silicone grip on the palm, touchscreen-compatible fabric on key

fingers, and a small zip pocket that can hold SD cards, a credit card or even a hand warmer. Thoughtful touches like magnetic fingertip holds make them easier to use in practice.

In the field, they perform as you'd expect from a good winter glove, but with added functionality that makes shooting easier. The flip-back fingers are the standout, removing much of the usual frustration that comes with cold-weather photography.

There are a couple of minor drawbacks. Sizing runs slightly small, so it's worth paying attention to the guide, and they're only available in black.

At the same time, the gloves are clearly well-made, with premium materials and good quality stitching throughout. I also like the idea of these being suitable for activities beyond just photography, and could imagine they'd be perfectly adequate for skiing, or perhaps riding a motorbike.

THE WRAP-UP

Functional, good value and above all a genuinely useful tool for photography, OTEX's gloves are the kind of photography accessory I like – niche as anything, but actually a great idea when you think about it.

I can imagine once you take them into genuinely rough weather you'd never leave home without them. They'll definitely be a part of my cold weather kit going forward. 🌟

TOP: The original version of OTEX's gloves had two flippable fingertips, the latest version has three. Behind them sit integrated magnets to hold the finger tips back when open.

BOTTOM: This 'flip-back' design is perfect for controlling all the major features on your camera.

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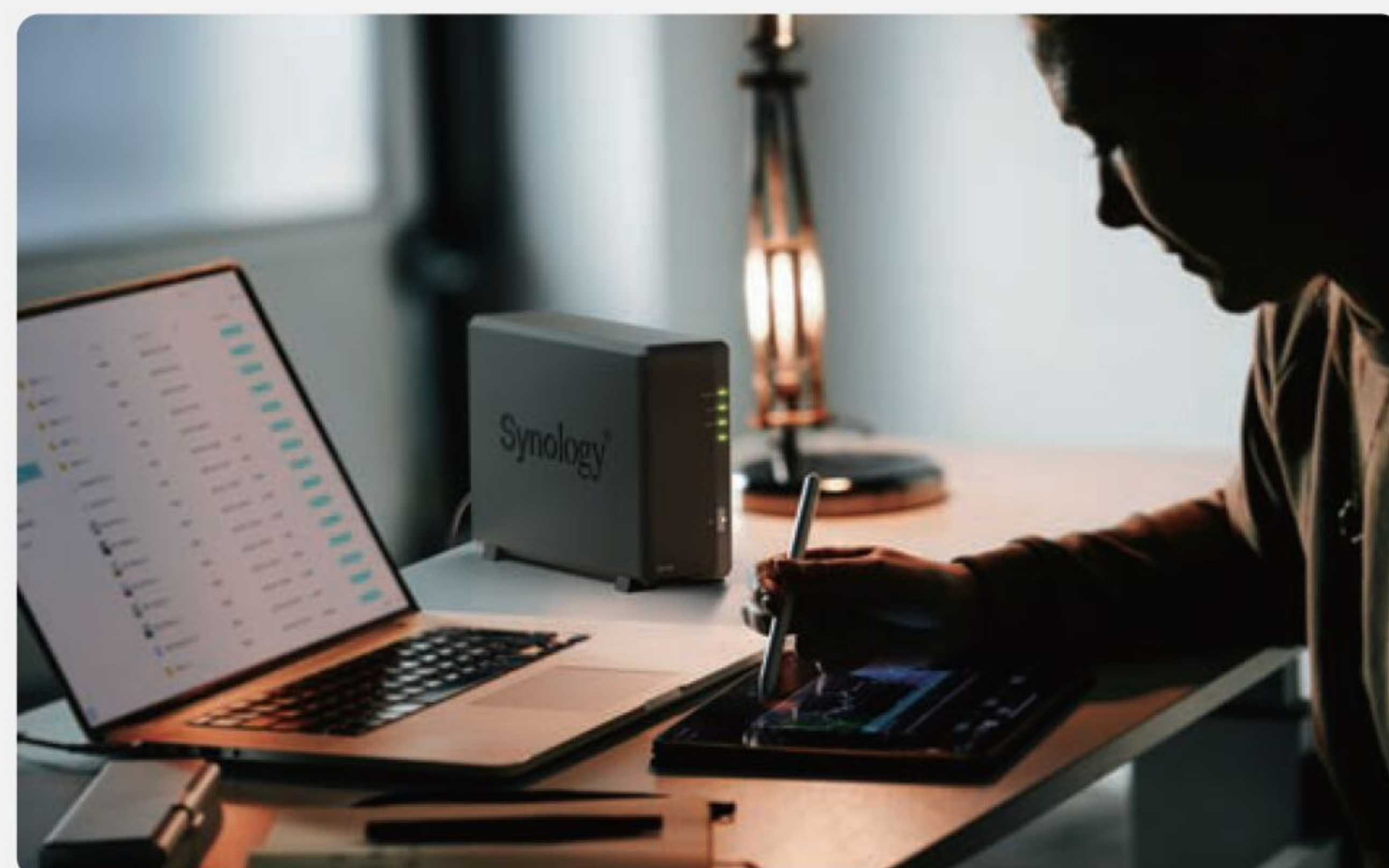
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Statements based on Nikon research.

