

LUG Yearbook 2019



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The Leica Users Group (LUG) is an Internet discussion forum comprised of photographers and photography enthusiasts, most of whom have an affinity for Leica cameras and related equipment. For additional information about the LUG, see

<http://leica-users.org>

Cover photo by Philippe Amard:
Steve Barbour watching Notre Dame de Paris, Leica in hand

Dedication

This LUG yearbook 2019 is dedicated to the memory of beloved longtime LUG member Steve Barbour, MD, PhD, who passed away in January 2020. Steve was a wonderful pediatrician, specializing in infectious diseases. He was a superb and compassionate photographer, and for those lucky enough to have met him, he was a great friend. Do read his book, *"I Never Wanted to be Famous" (Photographs of children in the hospital)*, which you can find for sale on [blurb.com](https://www.blurb.com)



Tara and Steve Barbour, by Philippe Amard. Used without permission.

Foreword

The appearance of this 2019 yearbook represents the welcome return of an old friend, long absent.

Since photographer Jim Shulman invented it in 2006, the yearbook has been anticipated and enjoyed by the Leica Users Group (LUG) family each year. According to LUG webmaster Brian Reid, Shulman continued to manage the publication of the yearbook for eight years.

It was, and is, a labor of love: designing the layout, getting the material to the printer on deadline and the sometimes frustrating task of convincing LUG members not only to contribute, but to get their entries emailed on time.

"Sometimes I'd receive a dozen or more pictures with the request, 'Pick two you like', other times I'd get [tiny] 50K images from clueless contributors – all the more baffling because the images were taken with cameras capable of producing images exceeding 10 meg files," Shulman says. "Once someone photocopied prints and mailed them to me! Often I'd receive no caption, or a caption in Proustian length. Occasionally I'd receive pictures with no information about the sender – and then I'd ask for a full name, rather than use "Stinky" or "Happyjoe" from the email address (I'm not kidding!)"

After eight years, Shulman passed the proverbial torch to Geoff Hopkinson, who put out the 2014 yearbook, followed the next year by Richard Man.

Then, it disappeared. Nothing for three years.

This year, LUG creator and webmaster Brian Reid decided to try the editorship on for size. This is the result. It is now Reid's labor of love and, like the return of a relative long-lost in the Outer Hebrides, the LUG family welcomes its return with hearty cheers to hearth and to home and to its honored place on the coffee table – reserved, yet empty, for three long years.

Bill Clough
Victoria, Texas, USA

Preface

The Leica Users Group, which we call The LUG, is an international email forum for discussions among people who like to take photographs with Leica cameras.

In its heyday, the LUG had thousands of members and many active conversations. It began 28 years ago in 1992; participation peaked in about 2009. That was the same year that Amazon started encouraging video product reviews, presumably by people who were uncomfortable writing and reading. The use of email is on the decline. For that matter, written language is on the decline.

Email requires you to read. To avoid excessive reading, dozens of new discussion forums, technologies, and habits have formed. We now have Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, Messenger, Tik Tok, Twitter, Reddit, Snapchat, and countless smaller, less-well-known forums.

So who's left? There have been very few new subscribers to the LUG for 5 years now. Just over 700 people remain, and many of them don't have much to say. We're all getting older. I was 42 when the LUG was started; now I'm 70. The generation following us is not keen on email, and the generation following them also ignores most of the social-media forums that you have heard of. It is the duty of every generation to confound its parents.

We're so old fashioned. But we take damn fine photographs.

Our eyes don't work as well as they once did. I had cataract surgery this year. It is much more difficult for us oldsters to focus with a split image rangefinder. And since the LUG was founded, cameras such as the Sony alpha series or the Fujifilm X series or the Nikon Z series have become excellent alternatives. Leica now offers high-end autofocus cameras, both DSLR and mirrorless, but they are priced like Leicas. Many of us are living on retirement income, and these fancy autofocus Leicas are too new for there to exist a used-camera market.

So even though we are the Leica Users Group, not all of us are still able to use the Leicas of our younger years or afford to buy newer models. As editor, I was happy to include pictures taken by people who once used Leicas (and thus know what "Leica Photography" means) but can't use their Leicas any more.

There are four phone-camera pictures in this book. Can you find them?

Brian Reid
California, USA

A personal introduction, by Nathan Wajzman

I don't remember which came first, buying my first Leica or joining the LUG. In any event, both happened around 1998. I was living in Brussels at the time and was what one calls a "keen photographer", using Pentax SLR equipment fed with Kodachrome and various brands of black & white film. At some point I began to lust for a Leica rangefinder, and finally I sold my Pentax gear and bought an M6 with a 35mm Summicron.

During the next ten years I bought a variety of other Leica film cameras and lenses, both on the M side and the R side of the Great Divide, with the LUG always there to help me spend more money... but also to provide a wealth of useful advice, heated discussion about the merits of this or that obscure piece of equipment, and not least – inspiration. A good example of the latter occurred some time in 2000. Kyle Cassidy, a Philadelphia-based photographer (among many other endeavors) challenged all of us who were on the LUG at the time to stop discussing whether lizard skin or black paint was the best covering for a Leica camera; rather, we should all go out and take pictures, and post at least one good picture every week, under the motto "keep pushing the button, it may come unstuck." Besides coming up with the idea, Kyle helpfully provided a web template that could be used by those of us (the majority) who were not so literate in html, and so the idea of the PAW (picture-a-week) was born. It transformed my photography. Rather than trying to photograph the monumental during my many travels, I integrated photography into my daily life, never leaving the house without a camera. I cannot overstate the importance of Kyle's idea for me, and I think also for several other LUGgers who began posting weekly pictures. Some have stuck with it, others have not, but the weekly postings continue. I have been at it since January 2001, so this is my 20th year of PAWs.

As we entered the new millenium, the photographic world changed radically. Film was increasingly seen as a niche pursuit, and many people, including many members of the LUG, moved on to digital cameras of various brands – usually not Leica, since the brand we worshipped had no viable digital offerings, and certainly none that could make use of those wonderful lenses we owned. But then in 2005, the Digital-Modul-R was launched, providing a digital back for the Leica R system. While it was expensive and quirky, it did enable owners of the R8 and R9 cameras to enter the digital world while still using those incredible R lenses – I still consider the 100mm Apo Macro Elmarit the best lens I have ever owned. And we began to see awesome images made with the DMR, not least by

Doug Herr, the Birdman of Sacramento. During those years, much of the equipment discussion on the LUG was about the impossibility of producing a digital rangefinder that could use the existing M lenses.

Then in September 2006 the Leica M8 was introduced. It is fair to say that it was a bombshell in our little Leica community. Of course, we all thought it was wonderful, with the exception of a few naysayers who complained about the price or about the fact that it did not have a full-frame sensor. And there was the infamous magenta cast issue caused by the absence of an IR filter in front of the sensor (which Leica eventually addressed by providing free UV/IR lens filters to buyers of the M8). For me, the main issue was price; I found it difficult to justify that kind of outlay for a digital camera with an expected lifetime of a few years. But I kept lusting, and finally, in late 2008, when Leica was about to introduce the M9 and therefore was offering significant rebates on the M8, I went for it.

I really loved the M8, and I still have it, almost 12 years later. Leica has come out with several better models since then, but they are priced well beyond my range, so I have gone to Fuji for most of my photography, not unlike many other LUGgers. But the M8 still gets used when the conditions are right, and the images it provides are still as good as they were 12 years ago. So I still qualify as a Leica shooter, especially since I also bought an old M2 a couple of years ago, and it does get used from time to time. The ability to mix technologies decades apart is one of the wonderful aspects of our favorite camera manufacturer.

Enough about equipment. What makes this community special are not the cameras and lenses but the people. Over the years, the LUG has become part of my circle of friends. Some are simply interesting people; some are kindred spirits whom I have never met in person but with whom I discuss many things off-list, photographic and otherwise. And then, there are those whom I have met in person, usually while travelling, sometimes during their visits to whichever town I lived in at the time. Many of these people have become friends in the off-line world. People like Jim Shulman in Philadelphia who has ferried me and my family around West Philly in his magnificent 1957 Dodge and who, back in the summer of 2012, met us at Philadelphia airport during a 12-hour layover on our way home from California and entertained us the whole day before dropping us off in the afternoon – sure beats the airport lounge! Jim is also a great photographer whose taste in Leicas runs to models of around the same vintage as his Dodge; he uses this equipment to produce wonderful images of life in Philadelphia, using his knack for finding the weirdest events and people. Jim

pioneered the idea of a LUG Yearbook and he was the editor for the first eight years, from 2006 to 2013.

People like Lluís Ripoll in Barcelona, whom I met for the first time so long ago that I don't remember, and who has made his city one of the LUG "headquarters", with almost annual meetings of LUGgers from Europe, North America and Australia. He has taught me the noble art of drinking from a porrón, a Catalan vessel from the days when people were too poor to afford individual wine glasses and just passed the bottle around. Being of a certain age, Lluís has also told me stories of life during the Franco dictatorship which ended when he was a young adult. And, like Jim, Lluís is a great photographer, using both analogue and digital Leicas to produce captivating images of his city, an inspiration to us all.

I must of course mention Ted Grant, or Dr. Ted, the spiritual father of the LUG. Ted is an institution in Canadian photography. He has been a photojournalist using successive models of Leica cameras since the early 1950s. He has published many books which grace the shelves of many of us. He has produced some of the iconic images of our time – for example, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau sliding down the banister one evening in 1968 after all the other photographers had left; or the diver in mid-air at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. Ted has also produced some outstanding personal projects, especially the two books "This is Our Work" and "Women in Medicine", both of which document the medical profession in exquisite black & white photographs. Over the years, he has entertained us with "war stories" from his long career (which include dangerous situations but also funny ones, such as the legendary story of being on the wrong end of a constipated cow whose constipation suddenly was relieved...). Ted has also been a source of photographic wisdom, most of the time centered on the KISS principle (Keep It Simple Stupid). He also taught us, perhaps slightly tongue-in-cheek, that real photographers drink single malt, eat sushi and shoot in black & white. Ted is now living in an old folks' home, to use his own description, but he has not put down his Leica, and we are fortunate indeed that his images also grace this edition of the yearbook.

As I look back on my interaction with people on the LUG, I come to realize how much of my life I have shared with them in the past couple of decades: the sorrow of losing my parents in the early years of this century; the joy of seeing my son graduate from the University of Bath, receiving his diploma in the magnificent setting of Bath Abbey; the pride felt after ascending a mountain pass on my bicycle for the first time. All of those events, and more, I have documented with my camera and shared in

this group, thanks to the spark provided by Kyle back in 2000, and thanks to our “saloon keeper” Brian Reid, the founder and owner of the LUG, who has provided us with the platform to carry on our chatter, and who has been a very benevolent dictator over the years, admonishing us gently when discussions have veered in the wrong direction, as inevitably happens from time to time, but fortunately not very often. We should all be grateful to him.

The demographics of the LUG being what they are, the numbers are slowly declining. In recent years we have lost notable list members, including Tom Abrahamsson in 2017, the tinkerer-in-chief, the inventor of the Rapidwinder and the Soft Release, and a great human being. And just a few weeks before this book went to print, we mourned the passing of Steve Barbour, also known as kididdoc, a man who saved countless young lives during his medical career and documented the inevitable tragedies but also the joy and tenderness so movingly with his camera.

According to Brian, we are now about 750 members of the LUG, fewer than before but still going strong. May it long continue!

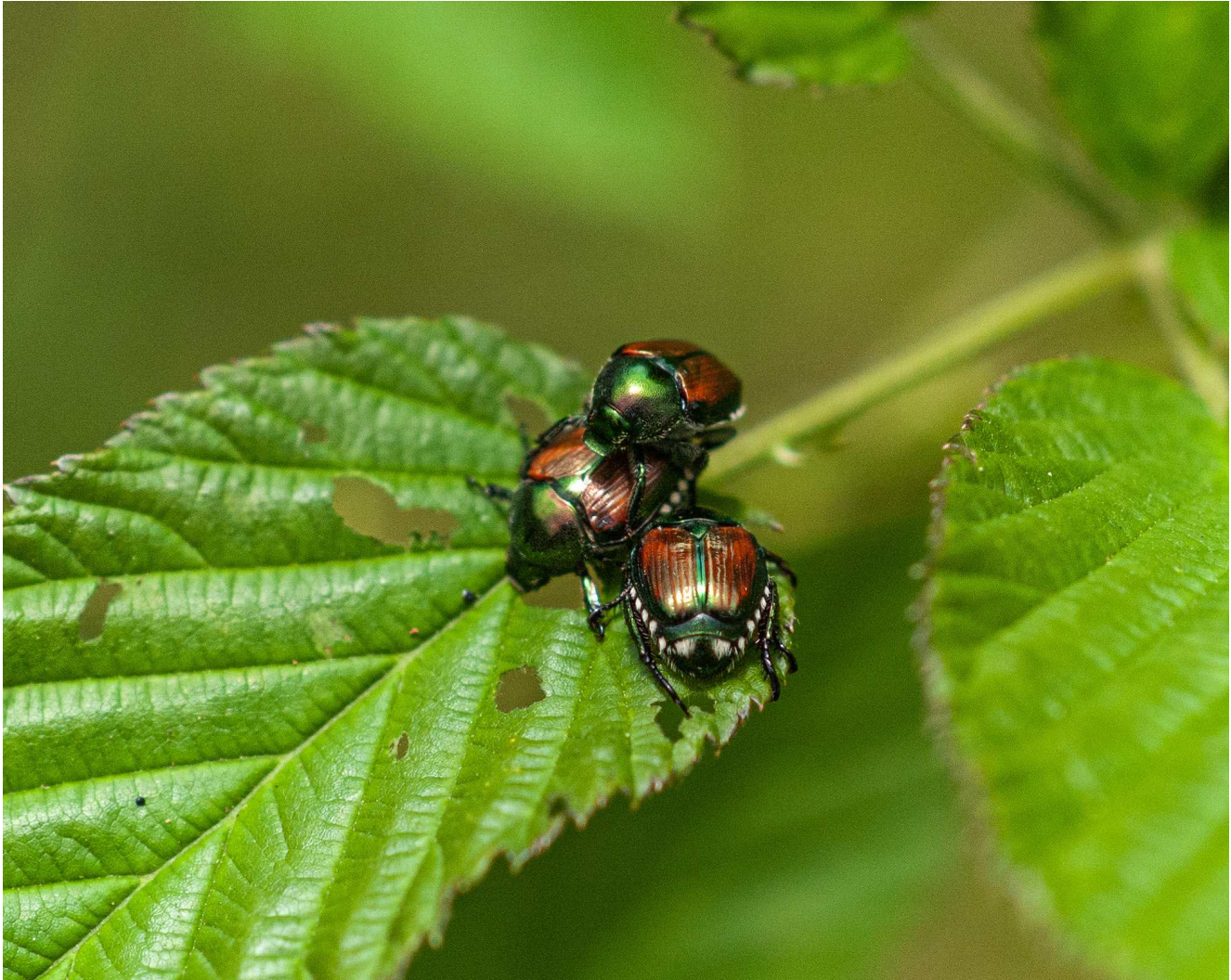
Nathan Wajsman
Alicante, Spain

And now, finally, the photographs.

Each photographer was offered two facing pages for submitted photographs. Some submitted only one. All are worth your time and attention.

The suggested theme was "Good vs Evil". Very few of the contributors were able to come up with anything evil, but Dan Khong's photo on page 37 put a big smile on our face, quite nailing that theme.





Jim Nichols, Tullahoma, Tennessee, USA.

Opposite: Oldest DC-3. Fujifilm X-E1 and 27mm.

Above: Destructive Nuisance. Olympus E-1; Super Takumar 55mm; Closeup Element.





Tina Manley

Opposite: Stone Collectors: Jaflong, Bangladesh. Leica Monochrom, 50mm f/1.4 Summilux.

Above: Steering the Boat: Shari-Goyain River, Bangladesh. Leica SL, 24-90.

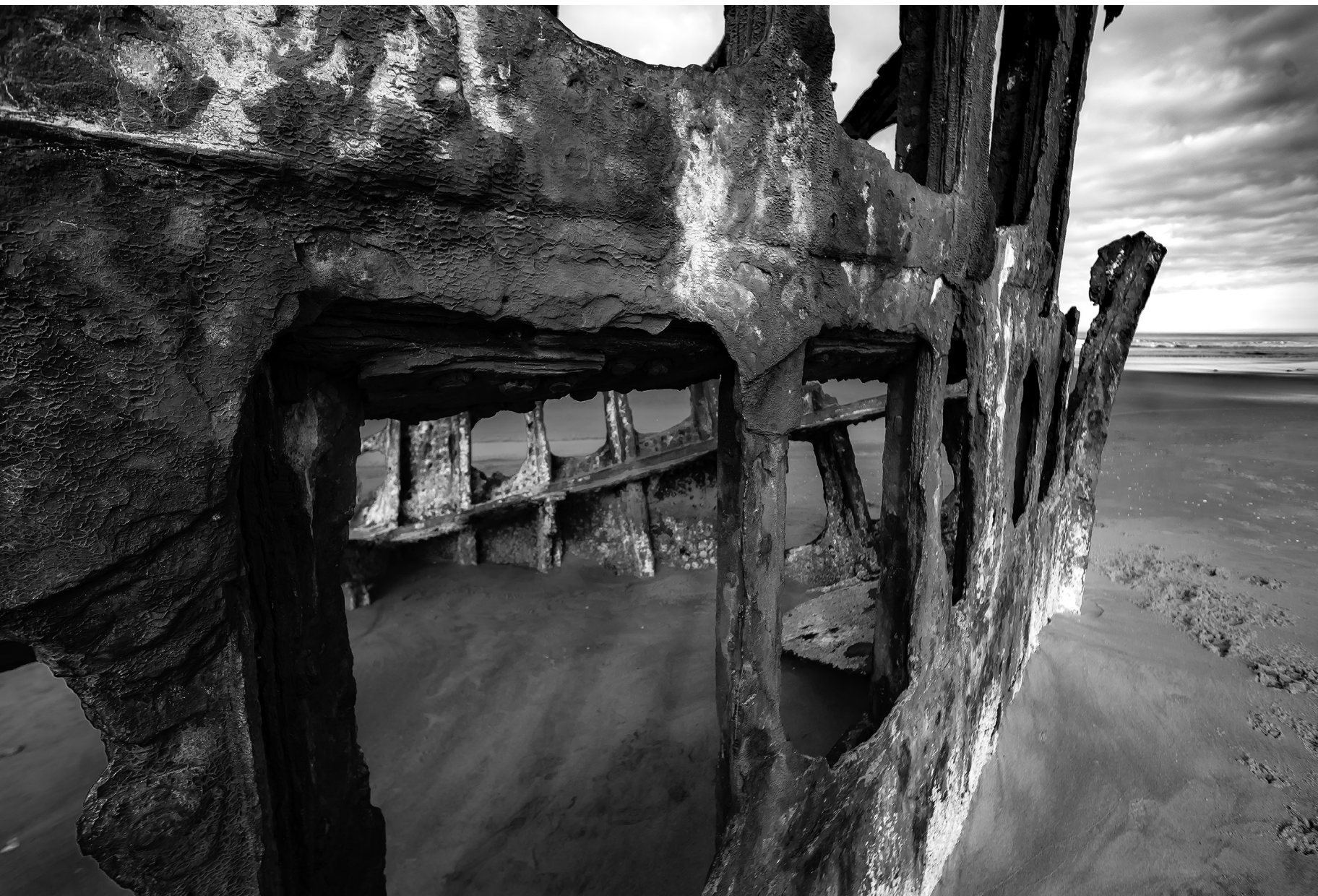




V. Roger Rubin

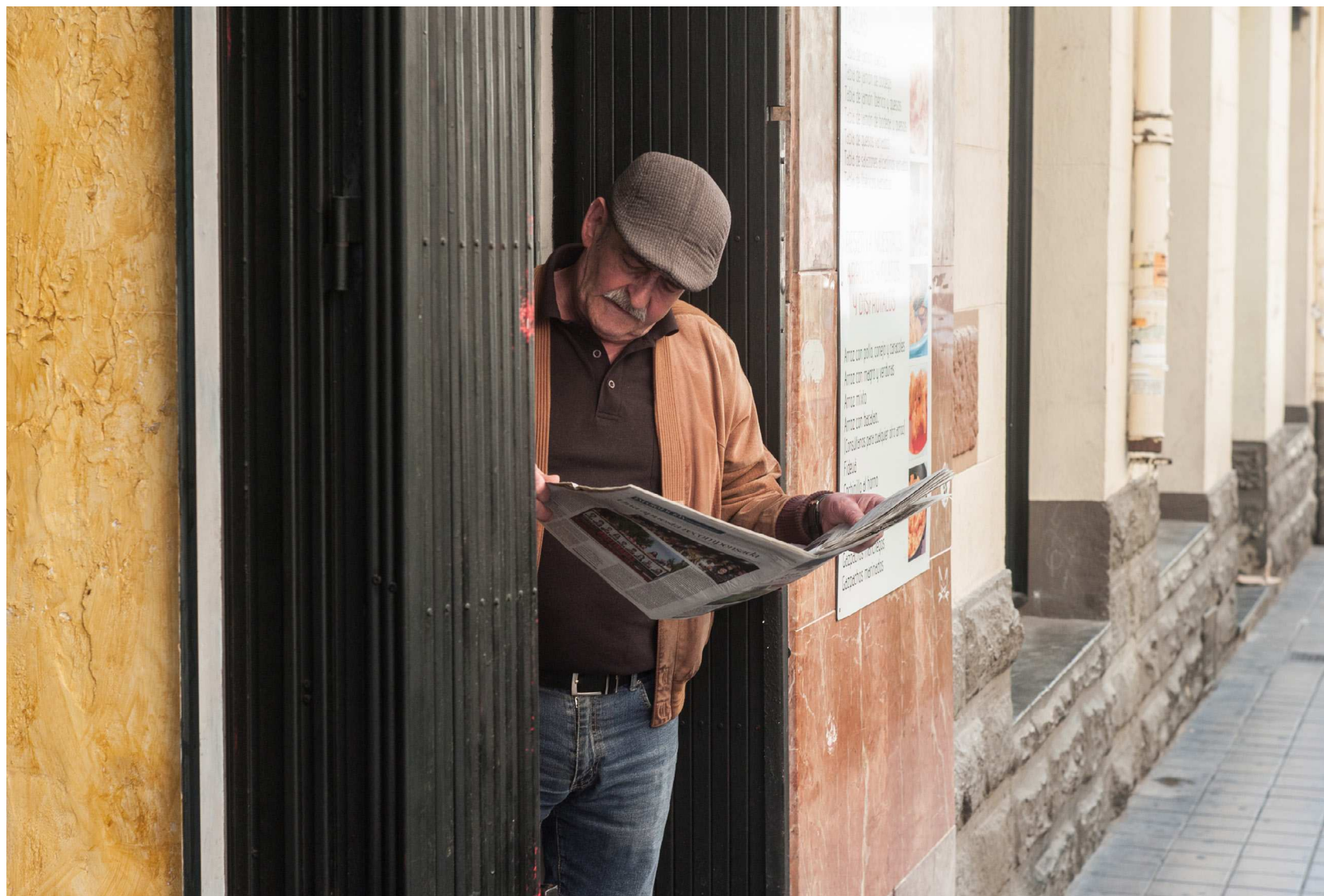
Opposite: Susan. Leica Typ. 109 (D-Lux), Vario Summilux.

Above: Gauri. Canon EOS M6 with Summicron f2.





Don Dory
Opposite: remains of the last century. Sony A7R.
Above: more of the world than the past. Sony A7R.





Nathan Wajzman, Alicante, Spain

Opposite: Reading the news, Alicante. Leica M8, 50mm Summilux.

Above: Love in the metro, Brussels. Leica M8, 35mm Summarit-M).





James R. Nelon, Woolwich, Maine, USA
Opposite: Heritage Days, Bath, Maine. Leica R8/DMR/135mm.
Above: Winter Lights. Leica R8/DMR/250mm.

 Planned Parenthood®





Al Crouch, San Antonio, Texas, USA

Opposite: Good or evil is often in the eye of the beholder.

Above: Good vs. Evil - Personal Struggle.

Both captured with Leica DG Summilux 15 ASPH.



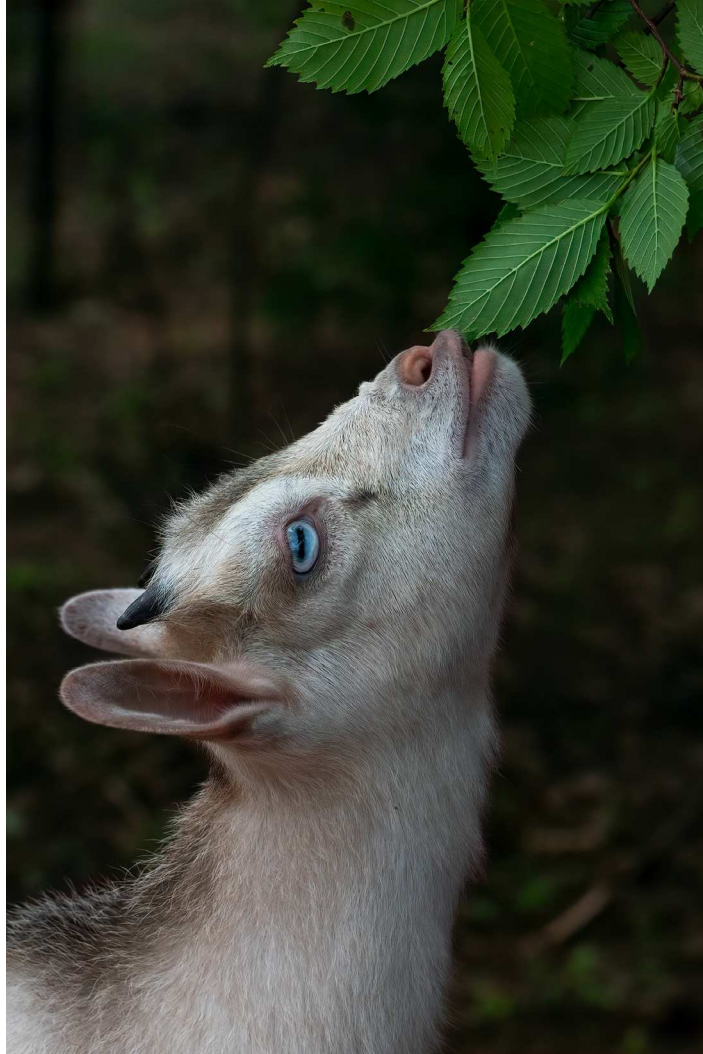


Howard Cummer, Victoria, B.C. Canada

Opposite: Clementine at Christmas. Leica M10, 90mm Elmarit 1/180 f/5.6.

Above: Eloise at Christmas. Leica M10, 35mm Summicron ASPH 1/30 f/4.8.





Ken Carney, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA
Opposite and above: Untitled. Fujifilm XE-2 with Fujifilm XF 56mm f/1.2 R.

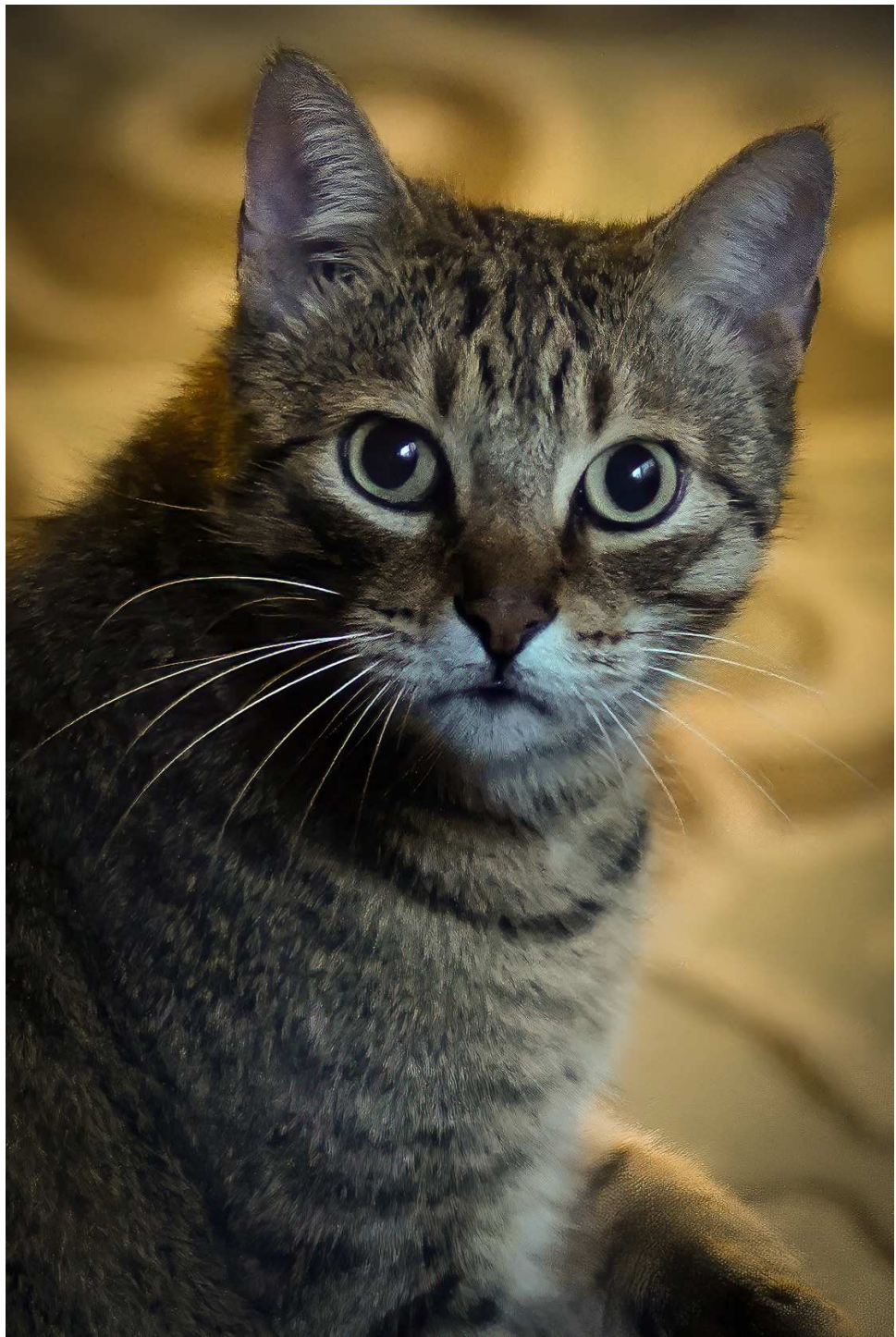




Lluís Ripoll, Barcelona, Catalonia

Opposite: The earth and the heaven. Leica MP, Summilux 35mm pre, Ilford FP4 EI 100 in D-23 1:1.

Above: Lovers on the top. Leica MP, Summilux 35mm pre, Ilford FP4 E.I. 100 in D-23 1:1.





Sonny Carter, Natchitoches, Louisiana, USA

Opposite: Pi's Eyes. Sony A7r3, Zeiss 55mm, 1/30 f/1.8, ISO 6400.

Above: Natchitoches Christmas parade. Sony A7r3, Zeiss 24-70mm @ 70mm, f/4, ISO 125.

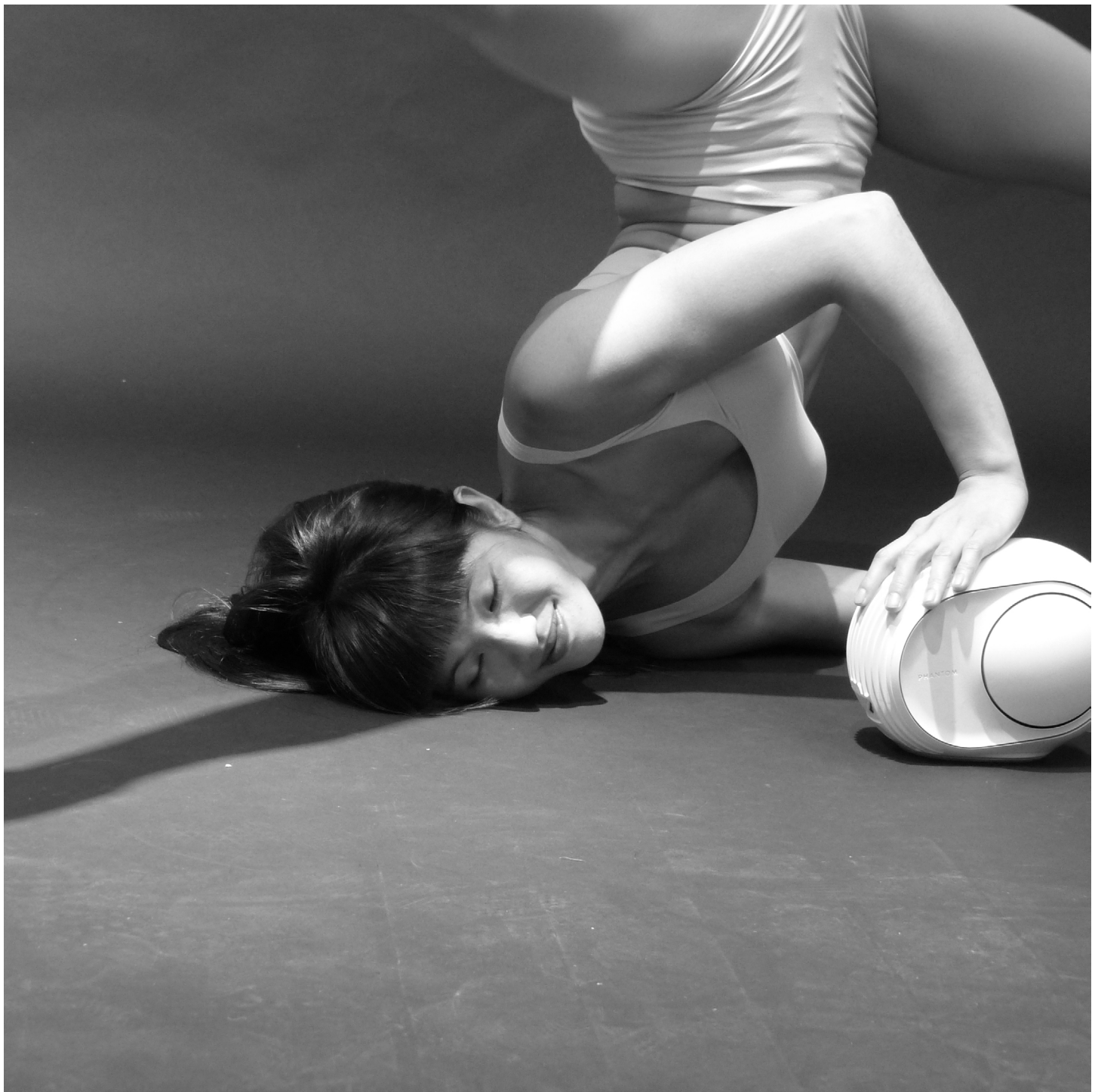




Brian Reid, California

Opposite: Realeboha and his uncle Kopano. Maseru, Lesotho. Leica Q2.

Above: Victoria, Jordyn, Vanessa, and Nora Margaret. Del Mar, California. Leica Q2.





Dan Khong, Singapore

Opposite: Good balance. Leica V-Lux 4, 1/30 f/2.8.

Above: Pinch your noses if you smell anything evil. Leica D-Lux 5, 1/60, f/2.5.





Geoff Hopkinson, Queensland, Australia

Opposite: Purple mood. Leica SL2, Vario-Elmarit-SL 24-90mm, 1/200, f/8.

Above: Body shapes. Leica S typ007, Summarit-S 70mm CS, 1/180, f/9.5.



Tuulikki Abrahamsson, Vancouver, BC, Canada
Above: Tom's Testroot – Adrian Bradshaw and Chris Cameron.
(Tom tested all his lenses and developers on this "Testroot").





Bill Clough, Victoria, Texas, USA

Opposite: Late specular afternoon sun at Monument Valley reflects off the face of a rock formation.
Above: Mission San Xavier, southwest of Phoenix, Arizona.



Stan Yoder, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Above: A Christmas cactus blooms. Leica SL, Macro-Elmar 90mm f/4 @ f/4, max extension.





Philippe Amard, Strasbourg, Alsace, France
Opposite: Steve Barbour's soul and eye, with Tara, Wingen, France.
Above: Steve Barbour watching Notre Dame de Paris, Leica in hand.





John McMaster, Wick, Caithness, Scotland
Opposite: Cat. Leica S(007) 1/120, f/2.5.
Above: Sheep. Leica S(007) 1/120, f/2.5).





Jayanand Govindaraj

Opposite: Penguinscape – Salisbury Plain, South Georgia, home to half a million King Penguins.

Above: Warning – a juvenile tiger turned man eater at Ranthambhore National Park, India.





Alan Magayne-Roshak, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA

Opposite: Resting dancer at fine arts open house.

Above: Rainy day on the Lake Michigan shoreline drive (35mm Summicron).



Helena Boskovic, Brooklyn, New York, USA
Above: Regina and Nick. Leica M8.





Curtis Bliss, Missouri, USA
Opposite: Nothing. Utah.
Above: Sebolt. Missouri.
Leica 1a. Elmar 50mm f/3.5, Ultrafine 100 ISO.





Peter Klein, Shoreline, Washington, USA

Opposite: Boy on a waterfall. Olympus E-M5, 45mm f/1.8.

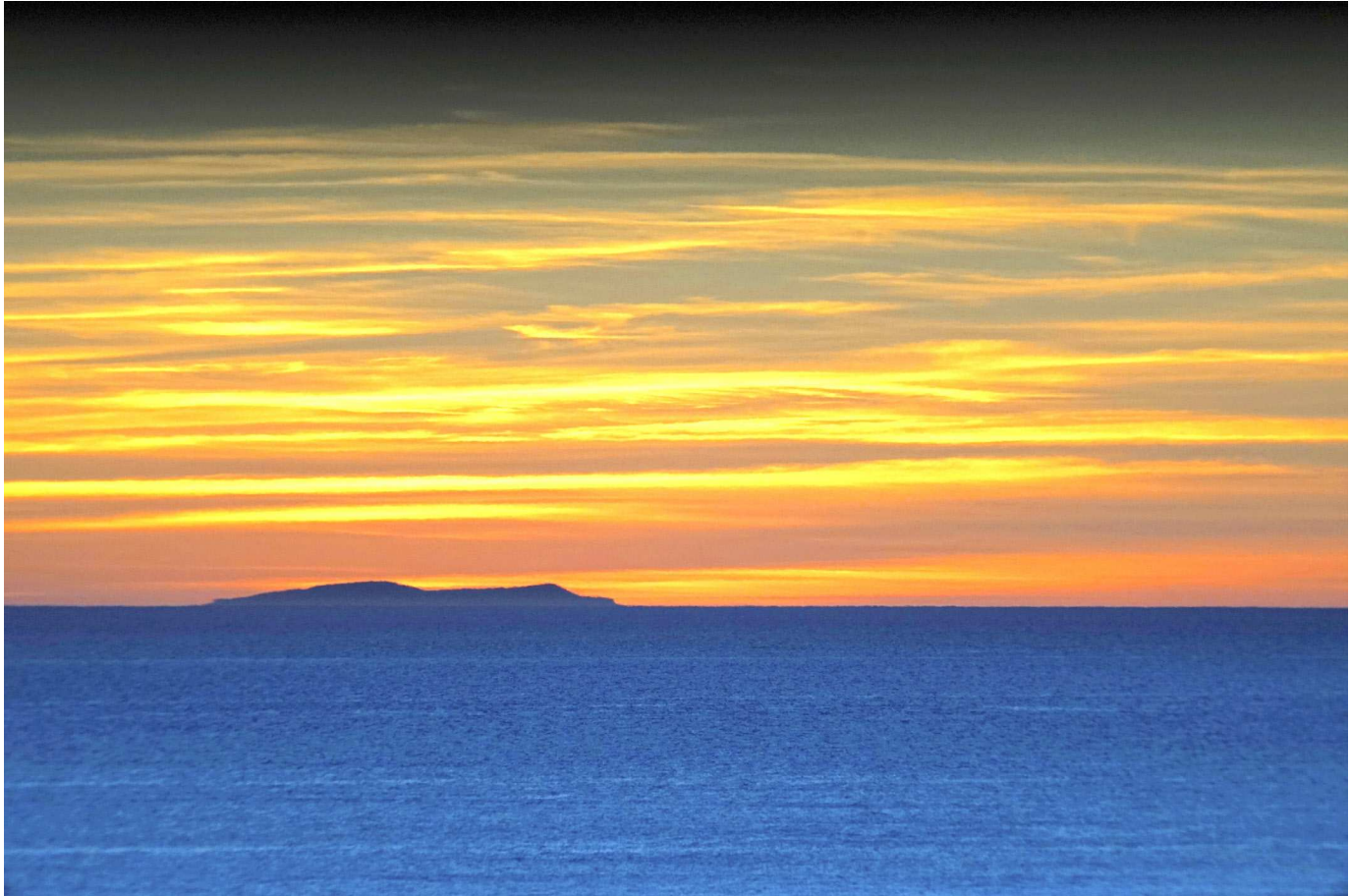
Above: Contra-temps Leica M10-P, 35mm f/1.4 Summilux ASPH.





Aram Langhans, Yakima, Washington
Opposite: Cattle Drive in Yakima Canyon.
Above: Alliance, Nebraska Hay Rest Stop.
Nikon D750, 24-120mm f/4



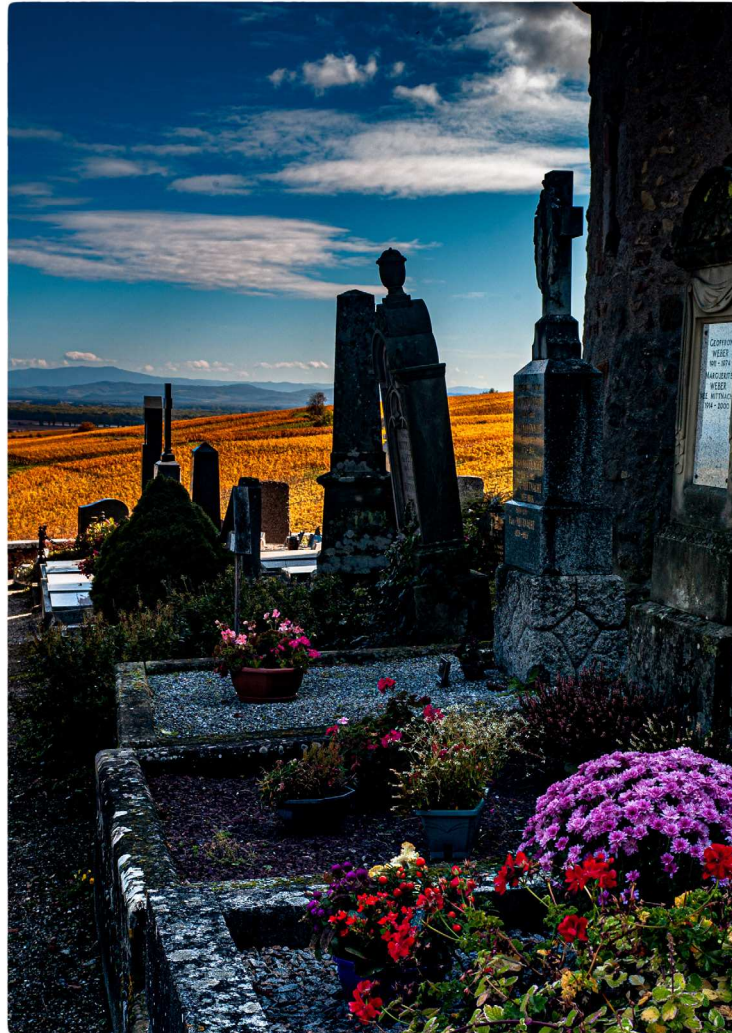


Stasys Petravicius, Rancho Palos Verdes, California, USA

Opposite: Portuguese Point. Sony A7ii, Leica Telyt F6.8 400mm ISO 1250, 1/3200.

Above: Santa Barbara Island. Sony A7ii, Leica Telyt F6.8 400mm ISO 1250, 1/4000, f/6.8.





Jean-Michel Mertz, Bergheim, France

Opposite: Strasbourg cathedral. Leica M8, Steinheil Orthostigmat 35mm, f/4.5.

Above: Autumn churchyard, Hunawihr, Alsace. Leica M8, Steinheil Orthostigmat 35mm, f/4.5.





Douglas Barry, Monkstown, County Dublin, Ireland
Opposite: 100th Liffey Swim seen from Dublin's Butt Bridge. Sony A7II, FE 55mm, 1/100, f/16.
Above: My Mother at 96. Sony A7II, ISO 800, 1/100.





Don Lawrence

Opposite: Light Experience. M10-P, Super Elmar-M 21mm, 1/6, f/3.5.

Above: Light touch. M10-P, Summarit-M 75mm, 1/1500, f/2.5.



Leland Deane

Opposite: Simon Pearce Glass blowers and Pottery, Vermont. Leica M Monochrome, 90 mm Summicron, ISO 2500, 1/125, f/2.8.





William Kyburz, Vienna, Virginia, USA

Opposite: Sunrise in New York City. Leica SL, Vario Elmarit SL at 90mm, 1/160, f/4.

Above: Don't forget the mustard (Food cart, NYC). Leica SL, Vario Elmarit SL at 67mm, 1/160, f/4.5.

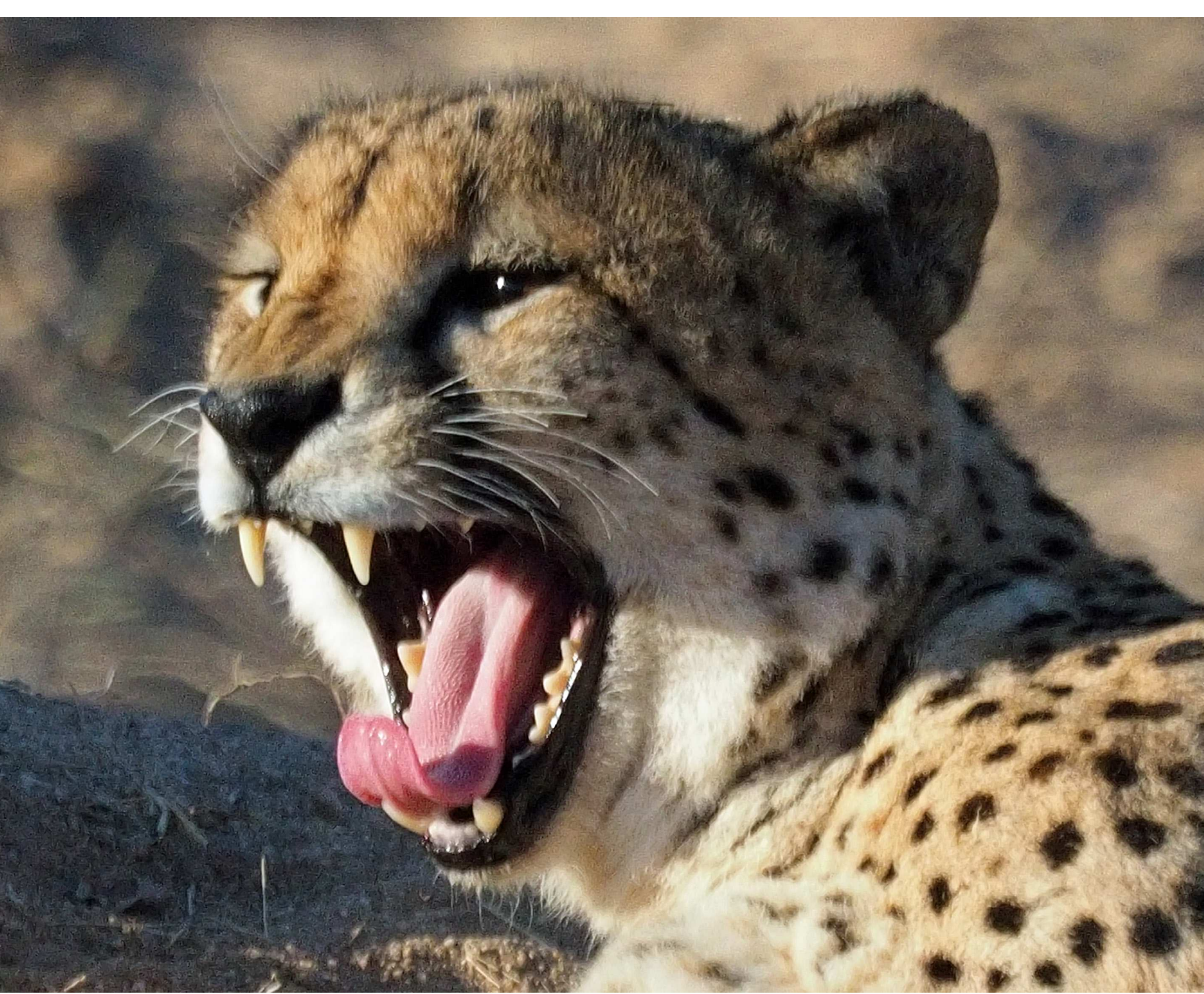




Mark William Rabiner, New York

Opposite: Statue of Liberty from Battery Park, dawn. Nikon D500, 28mm f/1.8G Nikkor, 1/125, f/8.0.

Above: The Maine monument, Columbus Circle. Nikon D500, 20mm f/1.8G Nikkor, 1/100, f/8.0.





Matthew B. Filippini, Chicago, Illinois, USA

Opposite: Growling Cheetah, Karongwe Game Reserve, Limpopo, South Africa.

Above: Horned Adder (juvenile), Namib Desert, Erongo, Namibia.





Blaise M. Filippini, Chicago, Illinois, USA

Opposite: Lions at Sunrise, Karongwe Game Reserve, Limpopo, South Africa.

Above: Leopard at Night, Karongwe Game Reserve, Limpopo, South Africa.



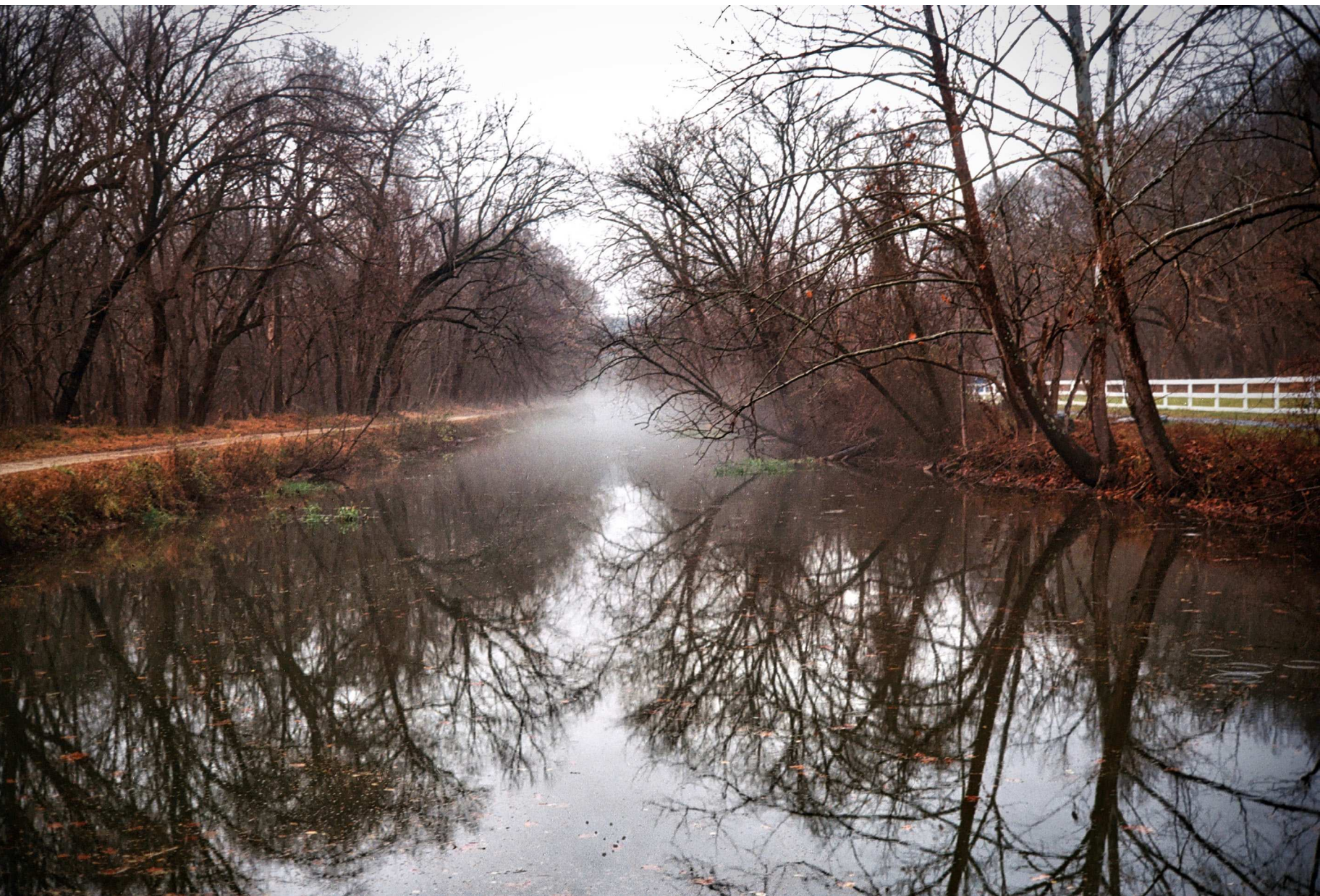
Jim Handfield
PHOTOGRAPHY



Jim Handsfield, Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Opposite: Fitz Roy Peaks, Patagonia, Argentina. Leica S, Super-Elmar-S 24mm, 1/180, f/11.

Above: Graffito, Santiago, Chile. Leica S, Elmarit-S 45mm, 1/1000, f/3.4.





Barney Quinn, Bethesda, Maryland, USA
Opposite: Autumn Mist on the C&O Canal.
Above: Autumn on the C&O Canal.





Mike Hastilow, Hove, England

Opposite: Winter silhouette. Leica M240, Summilux-M 1.4 50mm, 1/500, f/2.8.

Above: Otto. Sony A7R3, FE 70-200 at 200mm, 1/100, f/5.6.





Gene Duprey, Rowlett, Texas, USA
Opposite: Dinner time.
Above: Sky hunter.



SPRING DRIVE

JAPAN 9R31

-OABO T 2



Jeff Moore, Jersey City, New Jersey, USA

Opposite: Grand Seiko SBGY003 "Angel Wings". Panasonic DC-S1, 100mm APO-Macro-Elmarit-R.

Above: It. Is. Over. Leica SL, 24mm Elmarit-M ASPH.





Bharani Padmanabhan, Brookline, Massachusetts, USA
Opposite: Brahmotsavam at Hindu temple, Ashland Massachusetts.
Above: David's Shoe Repair, Boston Massachusetts.





Ted Grant, Victoria, BC, Canada
Opposite: Selfie.
Above: Snow day in Victoria.



Fruit
Stand



Mark Kronquist, Stayton, Oregon, USA

Opposite: Fruit Stand Corvallis, Oregon. Leica M9 35mm TT/A 1.4 Lens.

Above: Stayton Castle, Stayton, Oregon USA. Leica M4-2, 7Artisans 35 f/2, Svema Astrum IR Film





Lew Schwartz, Wellfleet, Massachusetts, USA
Opposite: Satyr with pink dog.
Above: Partners, Carnival 2019.
Sony A7iv, Zeiss Sonnar FE 35mm f/2.8.





Richard Man, Palo Alto, California, USA. "Between the storms". XPan-2, 45mm lens. Kodak Portra 160 film.





Henning Wulff, Vancouver, BC, Canada
Opposite: Ferrara Cathedral, Olympus EM-1 MkII 12-100mm f/4.
Above: Desolation from 10,000m. iPhone Xs.



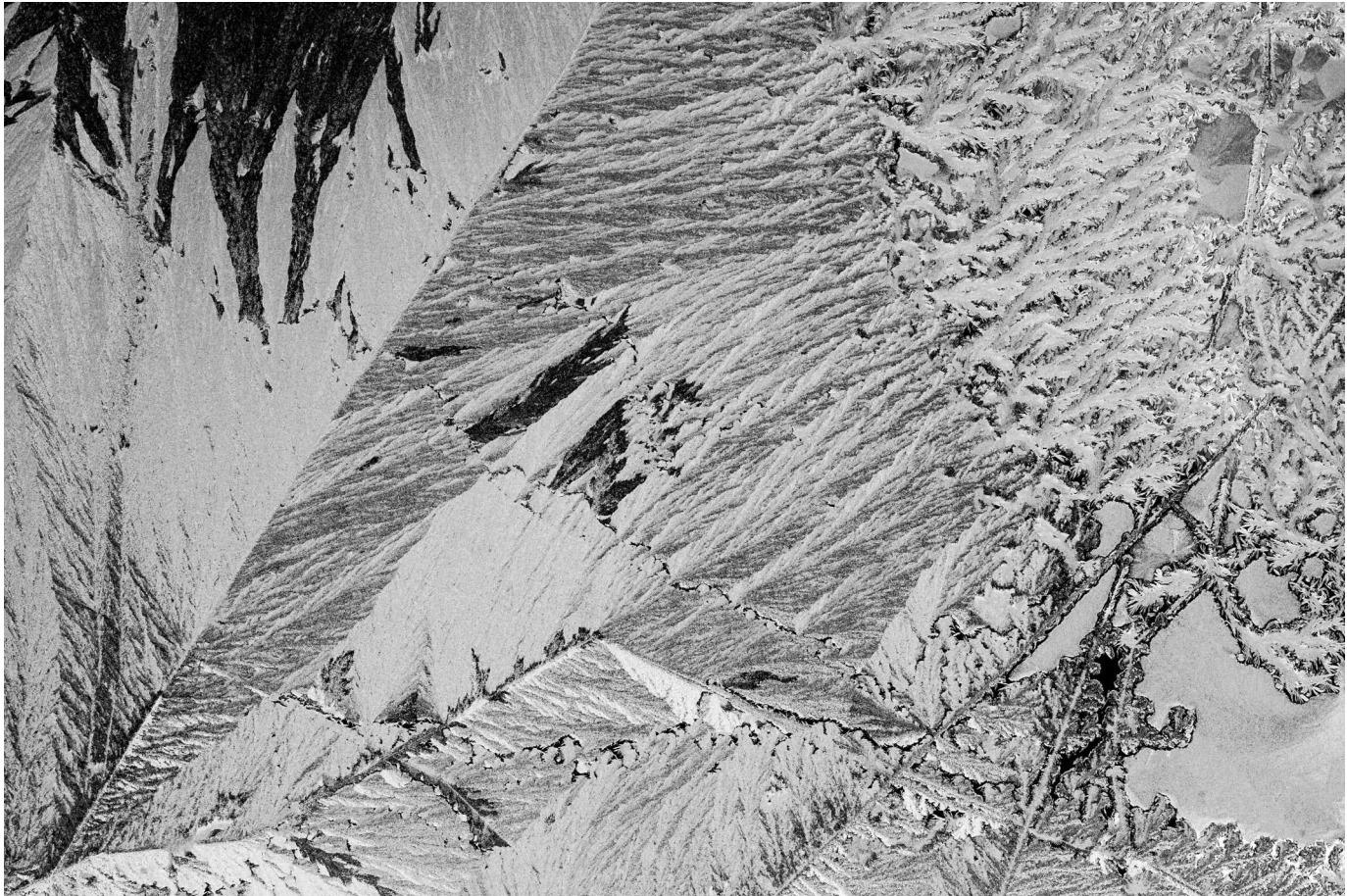


Ken Iisaka, San Francisco, California, USA

Opposite: Ligurian coast, Italy. Leica Q2, 8 sec, f/5.6.

Above: San Mateo Coast, California. Leica SL2, Vario-Elmarit-SL 24-90 at 90mm, 15 sec, f/8.





George Lottermoser

Opposite: Elsie. Leica M, 50mm Summilux Asph, 1/60, f/4.8.

Above: Frosted. Leica M Monochrom, 50mm Summilux Asph, 1/250, f/1.4.





Ric Carter, Washington, North Carolina, USA

Opposite: Dana & Zipper, Sundown Sports Bar, Scuffleton, NC. Sony A7Rii, Summicron 35mm.

Above: Strolling, Raleigh, North Carolina. Sony A7Rii, Elmarit 28mm.

Retrofocus, by Bill Clough

Photography is evolving. The craft of black and white photography is now an art form. The commonality of film and processing has slowly given way to digital; grain gives way to dpi; the latent image bows to pixels.

In the whole universe of photography, Leica's place is unique. From Barnack's first camera to the M10, Leica bodies are characterized by their "feel." Experienced Leica users are almost unanimous in praising the way the camera just fits in their hands – although photographers accustomed to the Ilf bodies complained about the added size of the M models.

A prime example – when Nikon introduced its first SLR, the Nikon F. Positioning your trigger finger on the shutter release was said to cause dread diseases in laboratory animals. These are but tactile considerations.

The Leica rangefinder cameras, with lens selection limited by the restrictions of that rangefinder, produced its own school of photography. Name another camera that can claim that. There are large-format and medium-format schools of photography that refer to the size of film, but not the brand of camera. There really is such a thing as Leica Photography.

The late war correspondent Robert Capa reportedly once said that if your pictures are not good enough, you're not close enough. He wasn't referring to optical distance. Lens selection that ranged from 21mm to 135mm almost required that the photographer get involved with the subject. When it comes to photographing people, the photographer subconsciously depends on that interaction.

In the mid-1970's, while I was working for the Houston Chronicle, I was assigned to photograph the rehearsal of a local theatre's performing William Gibson's "The Miracle Worker." What made the production unique was that the actress playing Helen Keller was blind. Some photographers would consider such a situation a heaven-sent opportunity for absolute candid photography. As far as the actress was concerned, I was invisible.

The Leica shutter was nearly silent, lost in the ambient noise. I've never been so uncomfortable on an assignment. Something in me demanded she should be aware, or at least have the opportunity, to know I was taking pictures.

The reason the M bodies were so prevalent in street photography was that when a photographer hit the streets he or she had to abandon the glitzy lenses popular on SLRs: the fisheyes, the ultra-wide-angles, the huge focal lengths.

In the 1960s I did a survey of which lenses were most popular in the photographs published each year in annuals by Popular Photography, Camera 35 and others. The predominant lens was the 50mm – a lens I thought boring until, late in life, I started contributing to the Leica Gallery.

Those who shoot with a rangefinder learn to filter out images only obtainable by longer focal-length lenses. They seem to watch instinctively for the photographs that adhere to the Leica look, the Leica school of photography.

When Leica started making SLRs the images were – and are – superb. But with the influx of the SLR, the emphasis seemed to switch to lens quality and megapixels. IS there a Leica SLR school of photography?

Just as Leica has evolved, so has the LUG.

There's always been a dichotomy among its members about its purpose. On one side are those who think its *raison d'être* was to ask and answer technical questions. The other side firmly says the reason for the LUG is to post photographs.

Both are right. It's a forum and an album.

The membership itself is split into two camps: the majority are photographers who have learned – or, are learning – their craft, and a few who believe that because they own a Leica, their pictures just have to be good.

Members always respond with answers and suggestions to technical questions. But the pleasure I receive is to see the world through the vision of others.

The announcement by Reid that he was going to publish the 2019 yearbook is concurrent with controversy about the yearbook itself. Should the submissions be limited strictly to images taken with a Leica camera or a camera equipped with Leica glass? After all, the name is the *Leica Users Group* yearbook. Some said yes. Some said no.

The economic reality of E. Leitz today has contributed to the answer. Numerous LUG members have quietly switched to Fuji and Sony cameras because they cost less but are equipped with lenses and sensors that equal or surpass Leica products. Is the M10 worth it? Yes. But one of the hidden costs of buying one is the salary of the bodyguard necessary to accompany the photographer.

I suggest today's purpose of the LUG and its yearbook is not dependent on what camera is used. Rather, both should serve as a showcase for the LUG family carrying on the great tradition of the Leica school of photography, whether the images are captured by an M10 or a mobile phone.

As part of his email signature, LUG photographer Alan Magayne-Roshak includes a quotation from Elliott Erwitt:

"All the technique in the world doesn't compensate for an inability to notice."

That's the secret of this LUG yearbook – a collection of the efforts of 50 photographers who not only could look – meaning their optic nerves worked – but also who could see. See the essence of a moment: the magic interplay of light and timing and subject, captured in a fleeting instance that never will come again.

No better philosophy of the LUG and its annual yearbook can be found than in the words of Edward Steichen:

"When I first became interested in photography ... my idea was to have it recognized as one of the fine arts. Today, I don't give a damn about that. The mission of photography is to explain man to man and each man to himself."

That's done by always having a camera with you, done by being aware and done by following the advice of LUG mentor Ted Grant:

See, frame, click!

Bill Clough
Victoria, Texas, USA

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