

Getting your photos published

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Getting your photos published in magazines and books

Introduction

1.9 trillion photos taken in 2024
5.3 billion photos every day
94% with smart phones, 318 million
photos from cameras, daily

Social media

40 billion on Instagram
95 million photos and video daily



Introduction

- It's never been easier to take, store and share photos. It's estimated that there were 1.9 trillion photos taken in 2024 alone and that every, single day, 5.3 billion photos are taken globally. Now, 94% of those photos will be with smartphones so we can ignore them, but that still leaves 318 million photos, taken with an actual camera.
- You can post your photos on websites, forums, on social media like Facebook, Instagram, X, Flickr and so on. But if you can do that, so can everyone else, and they do. There are over 40 billion photos on Instagram, with over 95 million photos and videos being uploaded daily. So, it's not really a question of getting your images out there, it's a case of being noticed in an endless sea of photographs.
- And that's where getting published in print comes in. Having your work in print is both far more satisfying than just seeing it on screen, it's a far more exclusive medium, and it places your photos right in front of every reader of that print product. But because there are vastly fewer opportunities to get into print, versus appearing online, it's correspondingly harder to achieve. And that's what this little talk is about - how to get your photographs published in magazines and books.
- First of all, let's discuss two sneaky ways in, starting with stock libraries.

Stock libraries

shipwrecks

Last edited a day ago

Description


Created: a day ago

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4 assets < 1 of 1 >



RF Creative 558944235

Abandoned boat at Phuket during sunrise


Credit: Ketkarn Sakultap Moment



RF Creative 1134566247

Fishing shipwreck damaged on the beach near the shore


Credit: Sumith Nunkham Moment



RF Creative 1413855117

Scenic view of sea against sky during sunset

Credit: Korawee Ratchapakdee / 500px 500px



RF Creative 579195819

Two old boat

Credit: I'am Moment

4 assets < 1 of 1 >

Stock libraries

- The first port of call for magazine and book art editors, journalists and Illustrators, when they need a photo for an article, is photos on Getty and Alamy. However, there are 130 million images on Getty and over 350 million on Alamy. So, getting your photo picked from out of that pile is hard - you need to have uploaded a lot of very good quality, varied photos, all accurately tagged, to stand out from the crowd.
- Now, if your photos are very good, then you have a reasonable chance, if you've done everything right. For example, this month, I wanted an image of a shipwreck to illustrate a technique article. It's for the issue that we're taking to the Photographic Show in London in March, so it needed to be a really good one. Searching for 'shipwreck, above water' on Getty produced 468 results, out of 130 million. Now, I'm pretty sure there are more on there than that, but they probably weren't tagged correctly, so using lots of keywords for the search engine to pick up is absolutely vital.
- Those 468 results made up 8 pages, so there was a good chance I was going to look at all of them. As it transpired, none of them were good enough, so I tried searching for 'shipwreck at sunset' and got 1,537 results, which was 26 pages worth. Now, I don't really have time to wade through that many results, so I was hoping there would be some good results in the first 10 pages, so again, keyword tagging is vital. As it transpired, out of all those results, I shortlisted only 4 images that were worth using.

Stock libraries



Stock libraries

- The rest were either not suitable, not actually shipwrecks, or simply weren't very good. So, if you only upload your best images and spend the time tagging them correctly, you have some chance of them getting selected and used by publishers.
- The other sneaky way into magazines is via General phot competitions.

General photography competitions

- There are lots of photography competitions each year, some huge ones the Sony World Photography Awards, the Taylor Wessing Portrait Prize awarded by the National Portrait Gallery, down to competitions for individual subjects like landscapes, astro-photography, portraits, wildlife etc. Most of them don't just have a solitary winner though, there are runners up and highly recommended. The Royal Photographic Society, for example, has an annual competition where those selected appear in a specially printed guide and feature in a travelling exhibition. So, this is one way of getting your work published. Personally, I had one of my images selected in the 2002 RPS competition, so despite working in publishing for 16 years at that point, I was quite thrilled to see it in the guide.
- The thing about photography competitions is that the organisers are always keen to promote the results, and when the next competition comes round, they will use this year's winners to promote it as well. Now, magazines are always looking for free content because our budgets are a fraction of what they were 20 years ago. So, in every issue of Digital Camera magazine (other photo magazines are available but are not recommended) we print all or a selection of the winners of one photography competition, usually every month. That's normally 6-8 pages, so even the runners up photos will get into print.
- Which leads us on to Magazines.

Magazines



This one



Not that one!



Magazines

- Your best chance of getting one of your photos into print comes in the form of magazines. If you haven't had an image used as an illustration, or been a competition winner, there are still a number of ways your photos can end up in magazines. Let's start with the easiest way, which is the Reader's Gallery.
- Most magazines have a Reader's Gallery because it's a great way of sharing what other readers are photographing and, most importantly, it doesn't cost us anything to fill those pages. In Digital Camera magazine (again, other magazines available etc etc) we have eight pages each month and it's one of my jobs to pick which eight images are going to appear in print, from the 40-60 that we get sent each month.
- That sounds like reasonable odds, a one in six chance on average, but if your photos are actually very good then you're almost guaranteed to get into print, because a lot of what we get sent is not a good enough level to be published.

Reader's Gallery



Reader gallery

Digital Camera readers show how they've been getting creative submitting images across a range of genres

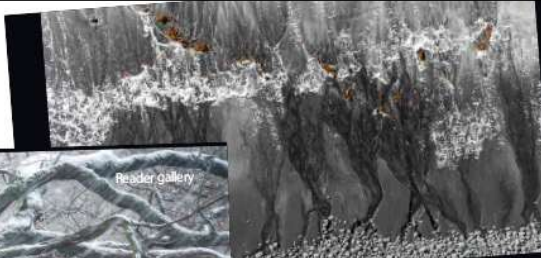
1 *Sideways*, by Richard Crick
 "This photograph shows the morning in Cornwall. In the town of Looe, I shot the 'Sideways' as the first of four from the 'Looe' series. I'm a fan of 'Looe', Instagram: @rickcrickphotography

Digital Camera says:
 The long exposure has captured the scene and the camera's motion, making it a very interesting and creative photo.



2 *Waterfall*, by [unreadable]
 "A beautiful waterfall in a lush forest. The water is crystal clear and the surrounding vegetation is vibrant green. The sound of the water is a soothing melody in the woods."

Digital Camera says:
 The long exposure has captured the scene and the camera's motion, making it a very interesting and creative photo.



3 *Close-up*, by [unreadable]
 "A close-up of a bird's feet on a textured surface. The bird is perched on a branch, and its feet are gripping the bark. The image is sharp and detailed, showing the texture of the feathers and the bark."



4 *Boat on River*, by [unreadable]
 "A boat on a river in a misty, atmospheric setting. The boat is in the foreground, and the river flows towards the background. The mist is thick and white, creating a dreamlike atmosphere."

Digital Camera says:
 The long exposure has captured the scene and the camera's motion, making it a very interesting and creative photo.



5 *Goldfinch and Thistle*, by Leahy Anne Wright
 "A goldfinch perched on a thistle seed head. The bird is facing right, and its beak is open as if it is about to eat. The thistle is in the foreground, and the background is a soft, out-of-focus green."/>

Digital Camera says:
 The long exposure has captured the scene and the camera's motion, making it a very interesting and creative photo.



6 *Bubbles*, by [unreadable]
 "A close-up of green and yellow bubbles. The bubbles are of various sizes and are floating in a liquid. The colors are vibrant and the lighting is soft, creating a magical atmosphere."

Digital Camera says:
 The long exposure has captured the scene and the camera's motion, making it a very interesting and creative photo.



7 *Street Scene*, by [unreadable]
 "A street scene with a building and a path. The building is white with a blue door, and the path is paved with cobblestones. The scene is captured in a wide-angle shot, showing the full width of the street."/>

Digital Camera says:
 The long exposure has captured the scene and the camera's motion, making it a very interesting and creative photo.



8 *Forest Stream*, by [unreadable]
 "A forest stream with autumn leaves on the ground. The water is clear and flows over rocks. The surrounding forest is filled with trees with colorful autumn foliage."/>

Digital Camera says:
 The long exposure has captured the scene and the camera's motion, making it a very interesting and creative photo.

Reader gallery

Reader's gallery

- There are also a couple of other ways to load the odds in your favour, and things to avoid. Firstly, photos that are typical of the season that we're in will have an advantage over those that are not. For example, right now a nice snowy landscape will beat a landscape with summer sunshine and flowers.
- However, it's important to pay attention to what's just been published, because we won't print two of the same thing in consecutive issues. An example here is that in the Autumn we printed a fantastic bellowing stag image in the Reader's Gallery which was followed by a few people sending in their stag photos. Unless the subsequent photos were in fact better than the one we'd just published, they had no chance of appearing.
- The other reason for checking what's recently appeared is that my main section of the magazine is the Active Projects, of which there are nine each month. These are where I explain the techniques for shooting different types of images so if you read this and send in photos related to one of these projects - say classic cars for example - it automatically has a better chance of being selected for print, because it shows that people are engaging with the content that we've produced.

Gallery submissions

Do...

Send the photos to the right email address

Make sure they are at least 3000 x 2000 px, or vice versa

Saved as JPEG at 10/12, best quality

Only send your best two or three a month

Include a couple of paragraphs about each image

Include your socials/website

Don't...

Convert them to CMYK

Send them as massive TIFF files

Spam the inbox with a dozen entries

Do's and don't's

- If you are going to submit photos for a Reader's Gallery section it's important to follow the instructions written on the page, starting with sending it to the right email address. Our Editor will forward photos on to me if they get sent directly to him, but other Editors might simply ignore or delete your email.
- It should be hi-res, so I can look at the detail, because if it's technically poor then it won't get selected, unless the technical aspect is secondary to the emotional or creative narrative of the photo. Someone recently sent me some photos of Koi Carp in a pond but they were so lo-res it was impossible to tell what I was even looking at. It could have been fish or it could have been a wallpaper pattern, it was impossible to tell.
- The photo should be saved as a JPEG with an RGB profile, because anything else will have too large a filesize and probably won't get through the email filter. So, although we convert and print in CMYK, don't send it like that. Don't overly compress the JPEG either, it should be a lossless factor of compression, which on Photoshop is 10/12 and above.

Do's and don't's

- And the final bit of advice is here is don't spam my, or the email address for the Gallery, inbox. If I get 10 images from one person in one day, I'll be less inclined to pick anything than if they just sent the best two.
- The main section of the magazine that I'm responsible for is the Active Project section and sometimes I get pitches from people about writing articles which I can use in this section, which covers single pages, two page spreads, and three or four pages. The key thing here, especially if pitching an article idea, is that you have a much better chance of getting published if your idea is a 'how-to shoot this image' type of article. Rather than simply emailing the magazine and saying 'I've got lots of nice photos, do you want to publish them.' Because the answer to that is usually no. It's not always no, but you need to be a professional photographer with a particular theme and for there to be a reason why we'd want to promote you - such as if you were going to be a speaker at The Photography Show.

Simple projects

Photo Active



Pine Island at sunrise with silky reflections and streaky clouds, which was achieved through long exposure.



TIP CARD

Use your tips cards. This project features in this month's bonus tips cards. For a handy guide to capturing photos like this, take your tips cards with you.

7 | LANDSCAPES

Transform a scene with a long exposure

Ryszard Lomnicki explains how to create smooth patterns on water and in clouds

Pine Island in Connemara National Park in Ireland's County Galway is a photographer's paradise. Surrounded by the tranquil waters of Derryclare Lough and set against the rugged backdrop of The Twelve Bens mountains, this stunning location changes with each season. This particular shot was taken at sunrise when the island is bathed in a warm, golden light. The soft hues of dawn

and the dramatic sky are beautifully captured through long exposure, turning the water's reflection into a smooth, mirror-like surface and adding a streaky, almost ethereal effect to the moving clouds. With the right techniques, places like Pine Island offer endless opportunities to create stunning, dreamlike photos that balance stillness and motion. Instagram: [ryszardlomnicki](https://www.instagram.com/ryszardlomnicki) Website: [ryszardlomnicki.com](https://www.ryszardlomnicki.com)

1

Plan your visit

Visit your chosen location at sunrise to capture the golden hues that illuminate places such as Pine Island and its surroundings. Autumn offers the perfect combination of vibrant colours and dramatic skies, but winter can have even better light with the sun low in the sky.

2

Choose a composition

For a composition like this, position yourself where the entire island is reflected clearly in the water. The foreground reeds and grasses subtly visible beneath the smooth water add depth and a sense of immersion, including the mountains and streaked clouds in the background completes the frame.

3

Capture the motion

Focus on contrasting elements: the stillness of the reflected island and the movement of clouds and water. This balance creates a surreal, painterly effect. Align your shot to capture the radiating light trails in the sky, which naturally lead the viewer's eye toward the island.

4

Fine-tune your settings

Set your camera to a long shutter speed, such as 30-240 seconds, to blur the water and clouds effectively. Use a low ISO of 100 to minimise noise. A narrow aperture (f/11-f/16) will keep everything acceptably sharp, from the foreground grasses to the distant mountains.

5

Try to use professional gear

Use a tripod to ensure your camera remains steady. A neutral density filter (I use a Haida ND3.0 paired with a Haida M15 holder) enables long shutter speeds. To balance the exposure of the lighter sky with the darker foreground, I add a Haida GND 0.9 Soft filter. Additionally, a Haida circular polariser can be used to enhance reflections.

Inside Ryszard's kit bag

- Sigma 12-36mm F4 DG HSM Art lens
- Haida M15 filter holder
- Haida ND filter: Red-Diamond ND3.0 (150 x 150mm)
- Haida ND Grad filter: Red-Diamond GND0.9 Soft (150 x 170mm)
- Haida NanoPro magnetic circular polarising filter for Haida M15
- Leofoto Ranger LS-325C tripod and LH-40 ball head



Ryszard Lomnicki

Simple projects

- Anyway, sometimes I'll get a photo sent in for the Reader's Gallery and I'll think, 'that's a great photo and it would make a fantastic project for the Active section.' This has happened a few times since I've been at the magazine. So, in those cases, I'd get in touch with the photographer to discuss whether they want to write some words and supply background photos to go with it.
- The bad news is, you won't get paid for it because I simply don't have the budget. 20 years ago a nice four page article like this would have made you £200, now it won't. As such, you don't need to be a genius with words, because I'll edit everything into shape.
- Now, all of this isn't to say there's no budget in the magazine for freelancer contributors, because there is, especially if you write photo editing tutorials and can produce videos. And the key point here is that you really do need to be able to write well.
- Also, there's the front cover feature, which is 10-12 pages gets commissioned as well, but you need to have a track record in the photography press, reasonable rates, and a great idea that fits with the schedule to get commissioned for this. So, there is still money out there, but it's mainly for established and affordable writers/photographers.

More complex projects

Photo Active

1/30 sec f/8 ISO 400
A 35mm focal length was used to capture the bridge into the village of Castle Combe, for once devoid of any tourists.

Photo Active

5 | PHOTOSHOOT
Capturing quaint villages
While we're in the winter months, let's discover the charms of a largely tourist-free rustic village, says Wendy Evans

The problem with visiting such tiny villages in the summer is that unless you discover some niche or off-the-beaten-track that there are only a handful of walking holidays for company, you'll be fighting through hordes of RTDs and no one. So why not pack your gear and not get out there until you can find your way to a frosty but cloudless day with plenty of water (sunshine). Even if the weather turns out to be grey and stormy, as long as you have the gear of Castle

Combe and Lacock (where there's a museum dedicated to Henry Fox Talbot, the photography pioneer) to visit this beautiful, quiet year-round village, you can return to photograph when the sun does reappear. Anytime you're away from the mineral park (a lot of those houses that you can't see, look out for market squares, old stone buildings, and a row of old schools and the church at old coaching inn.

1 Go to church
When there's a village, there will be a church – it's the law. OK, so that's not exactly true, but there's a good chance of it. Shoot from as far back as you can to get the changing verticals, using frames and bricks as leading-in lines. It's likely that you'll need a fairly wide-angle lens (the image was shot at f1.8).

2 Memorials to the fallen
When the call for war came, the village responded by sending their son to war. Many of whom failed to return. Look for a memorial to those who made the ultimate sacrifice on during WW and WW. Use an aperture of f/5.6-4.0 and focus on the memorial to it.

3 Bring your sheep
Market squares have been used for livestock sales for centuries, although today they are more likely to be car parks. Get there as early as possible to witness the mix of modern transportation and if you have to, photograph out the double yellow lines later, no one will tell you against you and yes, I did.

4 Mine's a pint
Coaching inn always welcomed by an entrance wide enough for horses to enter. This is an occasion when you really are better off shooting at dusk, when the lights are on and people are inside. If you're able to return later, take a sign or a wide-angle lens at f/2.8 and hang by the 500-year-old.

5 Back to school
The intricate architecture of Edwardian village hall is an eye for the eye. The use of your camera for a 1/30 sec aperture and present this building on a 1/30 sec shutter speed. On grey overcast days, I used ISO 300-400, too.

Kit recommendations
Kindly you want your widest lens and a short telephoto to pick out any interesting details you might find. For this project, I use my Canon 1.8-2.8 wide-angle lens, which generates plenty of digital field and used a 24-70mm lens as backup. Consider taking a polarizing filter. For shooting the reflections from the water, I used a 1.8-2.8 wide-angle lens and a 70-200mm telephoto lens.

28 | DIGITAL CAMERA | MARCH 2023

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DIGITAL CAMERA 29

More complex projects

- If you are producing some content for my section, then you need to be aware that we need more than just a final photo. This is also very important if you're pitching a how-to-do-it idea to a magazine as well. It can't just be one final image, there needs to be equipment shots, what we call a behind the scenes shot, maybe a screenshot from post-production editing, as well as alternatives to the main shot.
- So, if you're going out and want to turn your efforts into a photo article for magazines, you need to be aware and get all those shots too. Another thing that helps with how-to-do articles is to shoot both a right way of doing it and a wrong way of doing, so the two images can be used as a comparison. Example here being how you use depth of field in landscapes and portraits, or how you control the shutter speed in waterfall or panning action shots.
- However, if you can't string three words together to save your life and just want the glory of seeing your photo in print, then send it to the Reader's Gallery.
- And now it's time for books...

Books

- Compared to getting into print in magazines, being published in books is considerably harder to achieve. The easiest way in, is to contribute photos to a book someone else is writing, but here it's handy if you know someone at a publishing house or know the person writing the book.
- Sometimes a book author may come to you and ask if they can use one of your photos. Unless it's for the front cover, which you should certainly expect a fee for, just being inside a book isn't usually going to be paid for. I've had 13 books published and all of them have used contributions from other people. However, only two of them had a budget for contributions, one was for everyday photographers and I paid, I think, about £15-£20 a photo for those contributions.
- The other book dealt with famous photographers and I had an overall budget that I was free to use however I could, so I had to negotiate with them, or their PA, to get the best deals. I think the most I paid was £250 for one photo from Bob Carlos Clarke of Kate Moss. The least was actually to Patrick Lichfield, who let me use three of his photos for free!
- So, having a photo published in someone else's book, with your credit of course, is nice, but what you really want is a book of your own. If your pitch to a publisher goes along the lines of 'I have lots of nice photos, can you publish a book of them?' the answer is going to be no.

Books

- You either have to be a famous photographer doing a retrospective, or have a really strong, fairly unique, editorial concept for a book on a theme and go to a publisher like Taschen. Even then they will want to see a track record as a photographer.
- To give you an idea of how hard this this is, I was the Editor of Digital Photo User magazine at the time and approached a couple of book publishers with an idea. No-one was interested. About a year later, a photographer friend of mine was offered the job of updating a book that has originally been published in the 1980s about classic glamour photography.
- They wanted new photography from the well-known photographers, some new up and coming photographers, and the text rewriting to include digital cameras. He didn't have time to do it so recommended me for the job. So they asked me to come in to discuss the project with them. Off I went to this book publisher which was based in a very fancy, converted brewery in London.
- I met my contact there and she said, "come on up to the meeting room." I filed in, sat down at one end of this very long table and she sat down to one side at the other end. "How many people are we expecting," I asked, only half seriously. "Oh, everyone," she replied, and then about a dozen people all filed in and sat facing me expectantly. We said hello and then the MD said right off the bat, "So, why are you the right person for this project?"

Do your research, be prepared



Be prepared

- Fortunately I managed to convince them, we did the book, and I got to do another two books with them. So armed, I then went back to other publishers and pitched my ideas to them. As I then had a track record of being able to complete books, I ended up doing books for Quarto, Rotovision, Ilex Press, AVA Publishing, Routledge and so on.
- The key to this is that the ideas I pitched were all how-to-do books, which is the market that you have the biggest chance to get into.
- It has to be either a new subject - like when drone photography became a thing there have been a lot of books on the subject - or a really interesting and different way of approaching a well covered subject. And you've got to be able to have enough photos to fill most of the book, allowing for getting in some contributions to pad it out, depending on whether you get an artwork budget. Sometimes you do, most times you don't.
- Don't expect to get rich though, the lowest fee I got for any book was about £3,500, some were £5,500 and the best one was £11,500, which sounds a lot but it was four months of solid work and then follow up work proofing the manuscript. When it's completed and printed though, there's a lot of satisfaction in seeing an entire photographic book with your name on it.

Be prepared

- Sometimes you'll get offered a flat fee and sometimes you can get royalties and a fee. Some publishers will just try to offer you a royalty deal, which I tended to stay away from as most of the books I wrote when I was freelance so needed to know when my deadlines were and when the payments were coming in.
- It's usual on a flat fee or a split fee/royalty deal to get a small signing on fee, then payments for 25%, 50%, 75% and 100%, or combinations of those, for delivering completed chapters with photos. So, obviously, for a how-to-do book, you have to be able to string three words together, as well as take photos.