

Shoot for the Moon

Monthly news and tips from Landscape Photographer
Gill Moon



January 2020 Vol 1 - Inspiration

Hello

Happy New Year and welcome to my new monthly landscape photography journal
'Shoot for the Moon'

Over the coming months I will be covering all sorts of topics related to outdoor photography which I hope will inspire you to get out with your camera. Each volume will have a monthly theme and a corresponding photography challenge. The challenges are intended as a little bit of inspiration to give you a photographic focus for the month. Hopefully they will be fun and will make you think and also give you a good excuse to get out with your camera.

In each volume of Shoot for the Moon I will be sharing some of my favourite images along with hints and tips to help you get the most from the months theme. I will also be highlighting the work of some landscape photographers I particularly admire for a bit of added inspiration.

I hope you will find this interesting and informative. I am always keen to receive feedback so please get in touch if you have anything you would like to share.

Remember to aim high, be inspired and shoot for the moon! Thank you and happy photographing

Gill

If you would like to get in touch please email me at gill@gillmoon.com

Where to find Inspiration

The new Year offers us a fantastic opportunity to reflect on our photography, to work out what is going right, what doesn't work and to try and inspire ourselves for another year of image making. This volume is dedicated to finding your inspiration for 2020.

Reflect

Look back on your images from 2019 and really consider what worked and what didn't. Was there a particular subject that fired your imagination or a location that you captured where you felt completely in tune with your surroundings?

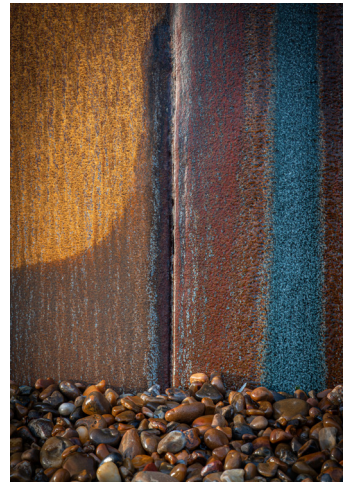
Reflection is always good. It enables you to see whether your photography has taken a specific direction and whether there are any subjects that you favour over others. It's a good way of defining your passion for something and can tell you where you should focus your attention in the future. It also tells you if there are any aspects of your photography that are weak, that perhaps you could improve on with a bit of extra focus or tuition.

Shoot different subjects

It's easy to find ourselves stuck in a rut always drawn to the same subject matter, feeling that we can't make compelling images if we are not in our favourite landscapes. This is clearly nonsense and probably has more to do with our perceived passion for an environment than our ability to capture it. So if you are feeling stuck in a rut, try something new. If you always shoot on the coast head for the woods, if the drama of the mountains is your usual draw head for the flat landscapes of the south and east. This exercise is all about coming out of your comfort zone, learning how to see new landscapes and practicing compositions in unfamiliar environments.

Similarly if shooting the wider landscape is your preferred method of landscape photography try swapping your wide angle lens for a telephoto and focus in on smaller areas of the view. Try cutting out the sky and

look for sections within the landscape that would stand alone as a compelling image.



This abstract image shows a small section of the sheet metal wall at Bawdsey which protects the cliff from coastal erosion. I loved the colours of the rusty metal and how they were mirrored in the colours of the wet shingle. Sometimes inconsequential things

like this are worth exploring.

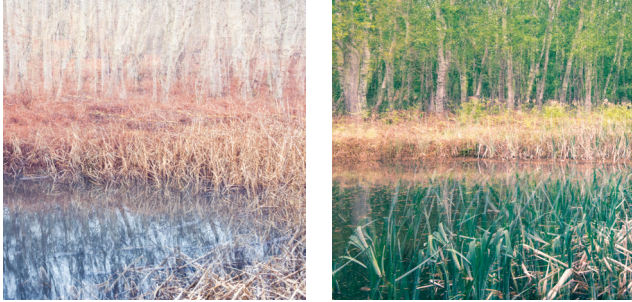
Try some creative techniques

If realistic looking landscapes are your normal style then have a look at some in camera creative techniques to see if they inspire you. The easiest one to begin with is ICM or intentional camera movement. This is a method where you select a slowish shutter speed of about a second or longer, then move the camera whilst the shutter is open. This gives streaks of colour and a blurred effect. This technique works really well on the coast where blurring using horizontal movements tends to work best. It can also be used in woodland and here you may find that a vertical moment works best. The beauty of this technique is that it is mainly down to trial and error. The type of movement you use will effect the final outcome but it is case of repeating the process until you get something you like. As well as horizontal and vertical movements try a sharp shaking motion or a circular movement for slightly different effects.

Most cameras will also allow you to experiment with in camera multiple exposure. This is a method of taking 2 or more exposures on top of each other. Canon cameras will allow you to see the first image you have taken so that you can line up subsequent exposures.

Nikon is not quite so good and you can't see the first image while the multiple exposure is in progress, so you have to guess the position of the initial exposure when you line up your second and subsequent shots.

Again this is a technique that may produce more images for the bin than keepers but it is good fun experimenting and can yield some really interesting results.



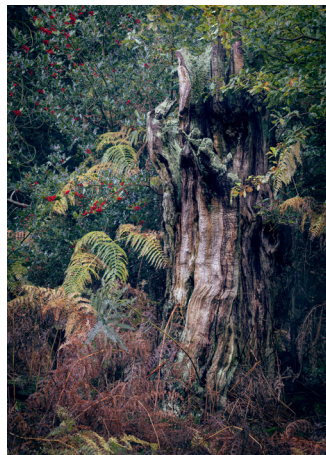
These two images were taken in Captain's Wood where I was experimenting with multiple exposure. They were taken in winter and spring using in camera multiple exposure. Each shot was made using 3 images changing the framing between each exposure.

Work on a project

Projects are a great way to inspire your photography. They give you a subject and a reason to keep going out and making images. A project need not be a grand adventure, it could be something as simple as photographing a local place over the course of a year or maybe a specific object with a story attached to it. Whatever you choose make sure it is something that interests and inspires you so that you will want to keep working on it.

This image forms part of my 'Enchanted Forest' project which explores the fairytale woodland of Staverton Thicks. Renowned for its ancient oaks and hollies the forest is wonderfully chaotic and primal in appearance and full of wildlife.

www.gillmoon.com/woodland-photography



Examples of other projects

Theo Bosboom - Shaped by the Sea Project

This is a beautiful collection of images from a project spanning the Atlantic Coast and including locations in Norway, Iceland, Scotland, Ireland and Portugal.

www.theobosboom.nl

Rachael Talibart Sirens Project

Depicting the power of the sea through photographs taken during stormy weather

www.rachaeltalibart.com/ocean

Marc Wilsons - The Last Stand Project

Made up of 86 images documenting some of the physical remnants of the Second World War on the coastlines of the British Isles and Northern Europe

www.marcwilson.co.uk/thelaststand

Look at other photographers work

The internet is a fantastic tool for learning and there are a host of inspiring photographers out there if you look for them. I have included 4 here that have inspired me over the years:

Lizzie Shepherd

Lizzie's work has inspired me for a while now and in 2018 I attended a workshop with her in her home county of Yorkshire. Her images have a gorgeous subtle feel to them. She also loves to work with the tiny details as well as wider views.

www.lizzieshepherd.com

Niall Benvie

I find Niall's work intriguing. He has a great ability to tell stories with his combination of images and words. I also love his collective panels which I think are a lovely way to display multiple images with the same theme.

www.niallbenvie.photoshelter.com

Neil Burnell

I first came across Neils work when I saw the magical images he had made at Wistman's Wood. I especially like some of the textures that he incorporates into his seascapes as well as the simplicity of his black and white images.

www.neilburnell.com

Mark Littlejohn

Mark is a Lakeland photographer who's images have a painterly feel to them. I first came across his work when he won Landscape Photographer of the year in 2014 with an image of a stream running down the side of Beinn Fhada. It was an unusual and captivating composition because it showed a section of the landscape and not the usual wide view.

www.marklittlejohnphotography.com

Book a workshop

Attending a Workshop is a great way of learning something new. Even if you are competent with a camera and think that you know how to take a good photo there is always something that you can learn from someone else. I see photography as a journey where your work is constantly evolving so any time you spend with another photographer getting to know how they see the world and approach their craft is time well spent.

Read books

There are lots of books out there on all aspects of photography. I have suggested a few titles below that have inspired me in the past.

Kozu books publish high quality limited edition Landscape Photography books from many well known and respected photographers and are a great source of inspiration.

www.kozubooks.com

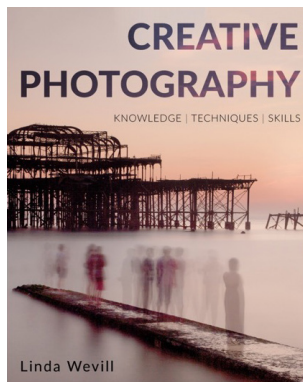
Charlie Waite - Behind the Photograph

Here Charlie shares some of his favourite images and talks about how they were made and why they inspired him.

www.charliewaite.com

Creative Photography - Linda Wevill

Covering long exposures, ICM, multiple exposure and other creative techniques this book is a great source of inspiration for those wanting to try something different. Linda also focuses on post processing describing how to use layer masks, blending modes and other photoshop techniques.



Creative Photography by Linda Wevill available from her website www.lindawevellphotography.com

Ian Lawson - various books

I first came across Ian Lawson about 6 years ago when I bought his book "From the land comes the cloth" which depicts the story of Harris Tweed and its connection to the Hebrides. There are some stunning images in this book showing the colours of some of the Harris Tweed designs next to landscape photographs which mirror exactly the colours of the cloth.

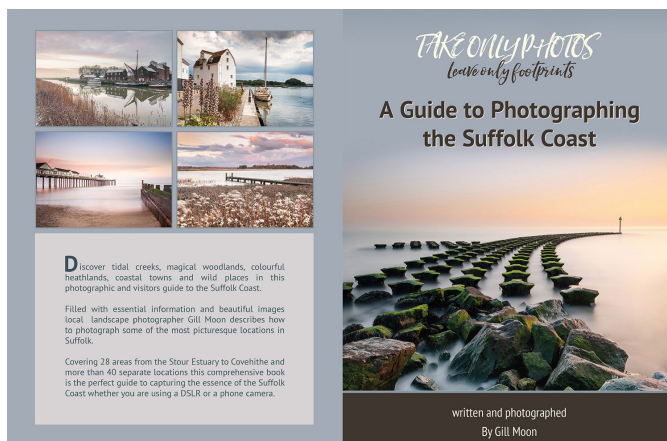
www.ianlawson.com



Photographing the Suffolk Coast Guidebook

If you are exploring Suffolk and would like a guide to photographic locations then I still have a few copies of my book available from my website.

www.gillmoon.com/suffolk-coast-book



Look at online content

There is a lot of useful information online. Some of my favourite sites are:

On Landscape

The online magazine for landscape photographers is a great place for finding inspiration and learning new things. You have to subscribe to access most of the articles but I have found it really interesting and informative.

www.onlandscape.co.uk

Nature TTL

A website dedicated to free tips, tutorials, inspiration, and equipment reviews for wildlife, landscape and macro photographers. Founded by wildlife cameraman Will Nicholls the site features loads of interesting posts about all aspects of outdoor photography.

www.naturettl.com

Landscapes by Women

A website established to help women photographers in the UK build a stronger presence in the photographic industry. It has a section on inspirational photographers with links to their work.

www.landscapesbywomen.net

Capture Landscapes

A comprehensive online resource with lots of free useful information as well as a featured photographer of the month which is always worth looking at for inspiration.

www.capturelandscapes.com

Join a community

Sometime inspiration can come from being part of a group. There are various different ways of doing this, either by joining your local camera club or by signing up to online groups and forums.

Camera Clubs

Most big towns have a camera club. These are a great way to meet like minded people. They also run club competitions, educational evenings and photographic days. You can find a list of all the UK camera clubs

here:

www.photostartsheet.com

Online communities are also worth joining. Here you can usually upload your images for comments and feedback and ask questions about anything photography related.

She clicks is a great community for female photographers

www.sheclicks.net

Practical photography talk is the Facebook group for the magazine Practical Photography. It is a good place to share images for feedback and comments.

www.practicalphotography.com

Suffolk Photo Walks

Every month I run a free group photo walk in a different location along the Suffolk Coast. Taking the form of a scavenger hunt these walks are designed to make you think creatively and are a great way to meet other like minded people.

www.landscapephotographytuition.co.uk/photo-walks

Competitions and awards

Like them or loathe them competitions are a good way to focus your mind and creativity. For landscape photography there are numerous competitions to consider including:

Landscape Photographer of the Year (LPOTY)

Founded by Charlie Waite in 2006 there is a fee to enter. The 2020 competition opens for entries on 15th January www.lpoty.co.uk

Outdoor Photographer of the Year (OPOTY)

Run in conjunction with Outdoor Photography Magazine www.opoty.co.uk

The Sony World Photography Awards

www.worldphoto.org

The Amateur Photographer of the Year (APOY)

Run in association with Amateur Photography Magazine www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/apoy

Royal Photographic Society Awards (RPS)

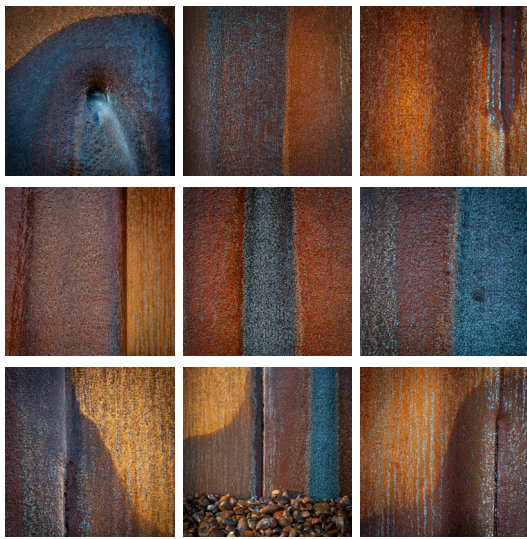
If competitions are not your thing but you would like to strive for an award then the RPS offer awards for different levels of achievement. www.rps.org

January Photo Challenge

1. Visit a location you haven't been to before and see if the unfamiliar scenery inspires you to capture a different type of image to the ones you usually take.

2. Focus on detail and shoot a panel of 9 images from one location.

Hints for panel images



PATTERNS IN STEEL
Bawdsey

When thinking about taking a series of images look for elements of the landscape to focus on. For the panel above I used a steel retaining wall at the edge of Bawdsey Beach. As I was walking along the colours and patterns caused by water running down the steel work caught my eye. I liked the combination of russet hues which contrasted really well with the blue of the wet steel work. I took lots of different images focusing in on small sections of colour and pattern. I used a 70-200mm lens for all these images.

When putting my panel together I tried to sequence squares with similar tones next to each other. I used the running water as my first square as I hoped this would begin to tell the story of why the colours and patterns existed on the steelwork. I placed an image at the

bottom which incorporated the shingle beach to try and anchor the images and make the work slightly less abstract.

Throughout the whole sequencing process I tried to make the images at the edges contain the eye within the square, using darker sections of colour to force the eye inwards.

When choosing a subject for a panel think about elements that could be captured in a fairly abstract way. Good examples are:
Patterns in rocks or pebbles on the beach
The bark of trees
Leaves
Flowers and trees



ELEMENTS
Oynton, Angelsey

Gill Moon

3. Take a series of images using intentional camera movement or multiple exposure and see if the images you make inspire you to incorporate the techniques in your work in the future.

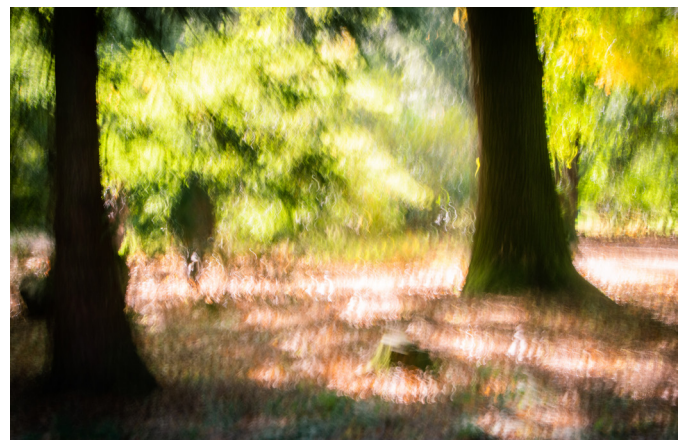


Image using ICM - 1.3 seconds, F22, 70mm at ISO 100

How I got the shot



Shingle Street

Nikon D850 with 24-70mm lens at 45mm. 1/500 second exposure at F14, ISO 400, Aperture Priority, Matrix metering.

This image of Shingle Street was taken in February 2018. It had snowed overnight and I was keen to capture some winter scenes on the coast so I set off on foot heading for the beach and coastguard cottages at Shingle Street.

As I walked down the road towards the houses I could see a huge bank of dark cloud coming in from the sea. The wind picked up and the snow began to fall very hard. By this time I was standing on the beach with no shelter and very poor visibility. I protected my equipment as best I could and tried to capture some images but it was very difficult to compose a shot in the howling wind let alone keep the snow off the lens! At one point the view of the coastguard cottages completely disappeared in the blizzard. Eventually I managed to capture a few images with this one being my favourite.

I didn't have a tripod with me so I had to raise my ISO to achieve an appropriate shutter speed for the conditions. I tried to over expose the image a little to ensure that the snow looked white and not a grubby grey colour. I like the fact that the snow flakes can be seen coming in from the right of the image and as they blow in front of the cottage they give a painterly feel to the whole image. I had filters with me but didn't use any on this shot as they would have got covered in snow really quickly and I felt they would have hindered my image taking in these conditions.

New Workshops for 2020

River Deben Workshop

Join me for a days photography tuition exploring the beautiful and varied landscapes of the River Deben.

We will be photographing some of the varied landscapes found along this waterway and will be stopping to explore Bawdsey Quay, Ramsholt and Woodbridge.

During the workshop we will explore the art of making a photograph and will cover technical aspects (shooting mode, choice of aperture, focusing, exposure) as well as composition (identifying a subject, finding a viewpoint, working with supporting elements and using lines, shapes, patterns and textures to create depth and interest).

We will look at composition in the wider landscape and also in more detailed scenes. There will also be the opportunity to try long exposure photography for those wishing to master this creative technique.

This 6 hour workshop costs £95 and includes a one course lunch and transport between locations if required. More details at:
www.landscapephotographytuition.co.uk



Winter Woodland Workshop

My Winter Woodland Workshop is a full day workshop which explores two of my favourite areas of Suffolk woodland Upper Hollesley Common and Staverton Thicks. These are two very different areas each with their own unique challenges and compositions.

During this workshop we will explore a variety of habitats from the uniformity of the pine plantations to the more natural mixed woodland composed of oak, silver birch glades and beech trees. We will practice the art of composition and 'seeing' an image using a variety of techniques.

We will look at the wider landscape as well as at more intimate details and will explore different methods of finding and observing images in wild landscapes.

After a pub lunch we will move to Staverton Thicks. This is one of my favourite areas of woodland in Suffolk but it is also a very chaotic place that can be difficult to photograph. However when you get your eye in it is fantastically rewarding and an enchanting place to explore.

This is a 7 hour workshop and includes lunch and printed course notes. It is suitable for all levels and abilities and all camera types. More details at :

www.landscapephotographytuition.co.uk

