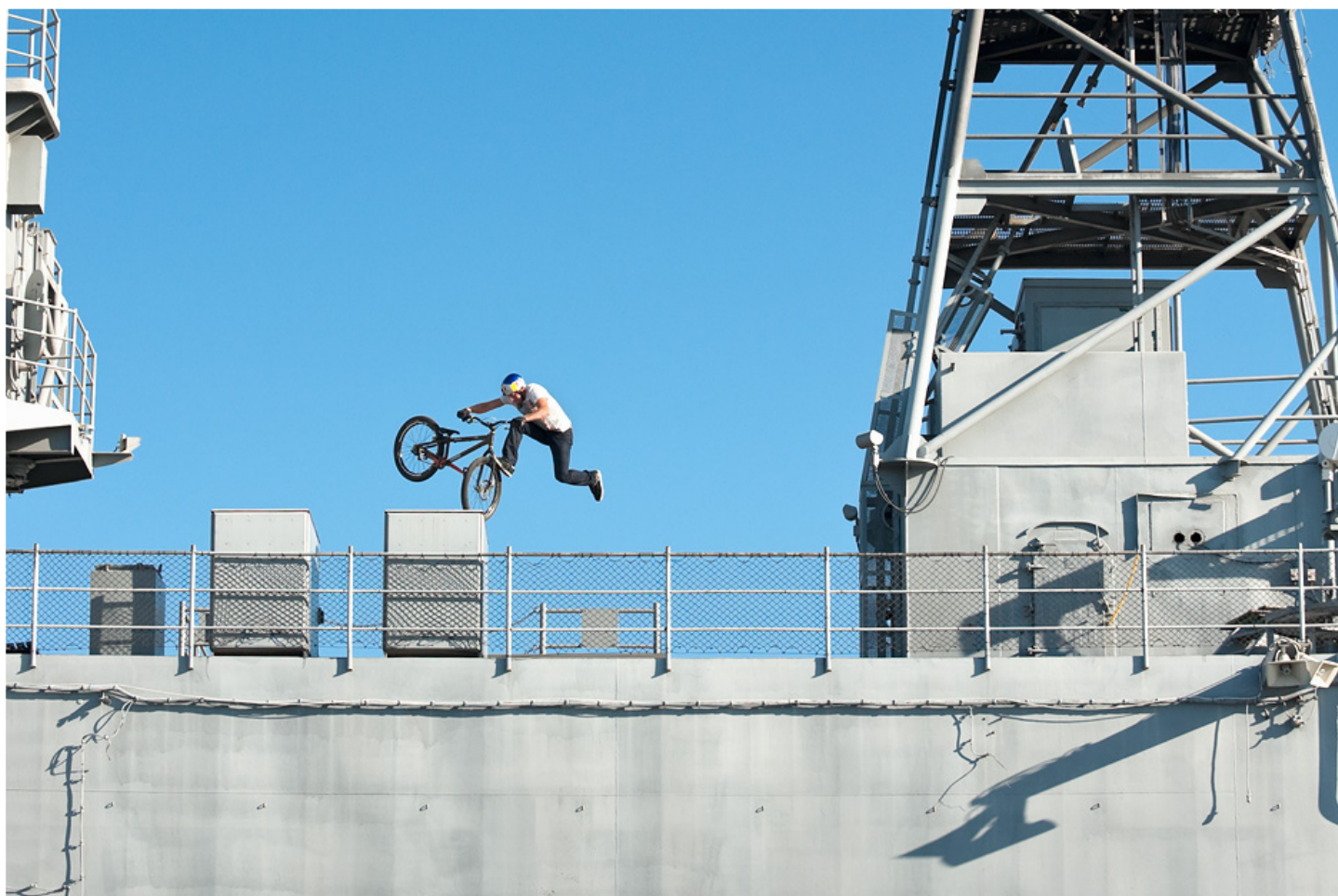


NEWSLETTER

MICHAEL CLARK

PHOTOGRAPHY



FALL 2009



FALL 2009 NEWSLETTER

3 EDITORIAL

Updates on recent workshops, assignments and upcoming trips as well as the latest on the new book: *Digital Masters: Adventure Photography*.

4 NEWS

The latest on a Lowepro ad that is currently running in photo magazines around the world and a list of my recent clients.

7 WORKSHOPS

Adventure Photography Workshop hosted by the Santa Fe Workshops.

8 EQUIPMENT REVIEW

The 12 MP Nikon D3 vs. a 39 MP Hasselblad H3D. A comparison of resolution and image quality.

6 SPECIAL PORTFOLIO

Shooting on assignment for Red Bull in San Diego, California.

10 PORTFOLIO

Recent images from California, Pennsylvania and New Mexico.

12 PERSPECTIVE

Connecting with your Audience: Musings on a U2 concert and how that translates for photographers.

17 PARTING SHOT

Danny MacAskill doing a back flip in San Diego, California.

Cover: Danny MacAskill throwing a tail whip on the USS Midway aircraft carrier in San Diego, California.

Above: Portrait of Danny MacAskill after a long day of riding in San Diego, California.

All images Copyright © Michael Clark Photography.

The Traveling Photographer

UPDATES ON WORKSHOPS, ASSIGNMENTS & EXPEDITIONS



As I sit here writing this editorial, my office is a disaster. Backpacks, sleeping bags, climbing gear as well as boatloads of photo gear are strewn everywhere. I am packing for a ten day shoot in Hawaii and an extended backcountry trip to Patagonia, which I leave for immediately after getting back from Hawaii. Even in these rough economic times business is still quite brisk thankfully and this equates to a lot of traveling for me over the next few months. This Fall has been filled with several assignments, two workshops and a ton of office work - as well as a bit of fun. Now the serious work begins as I head out to Hawaii to shoot some more big wave surfing and then off to Patagonia to photograph an expedition into the Cordillera Darwin at the very tip of South America. And that is just the month of December.

I'll be back in Patagonia for most of February covering the [2010 Wenger Patagonian Expedition Race](#) and I'll be in Los Angeles, New York and Denver doing book signings and presentations of my work for the release of my new book on adventure sports photography, [Digital Masters: Adventure Photography](#), which is out now. Speaking of the book, there is also a full page advertisement for it in the newsletter on Page 16. You can order the book on Amazon or at Barnes and Nobles and you can also find it at a book store near you. I have to say the launch of the new book is pretty exciting for me as it represents eight months of hard work and the book itself includes as much info as we could possibly stuff into it. In fact, the publisher extended the page count of the book by fifty pages just so we could include as much information as possible. This will be *the* book on adventure sports photography I think as there is nothing else out there that even comes close to covering in as much detail how to shoot adventure sports and what it takes to be a pro adventure photographer.

Both of the photo workshops that I taught in October, one with Andy Biggs here in Santa Fe and another with David Tejada and the Mentor Series Workshops in Philadelphia were a huge success. My thanks to Andy, the Mentor Series Workshops, David and all of the participants who made those such a joy to teach and be a part of. They were two of the best workshops I have ever been a part of and I look forward to teaching next year with Andy again and at the Santa Fe Workshops. I'll keep you posted on upcoming workshops here in the newsletter and on my blog. Of note, I will be teaching an adventure photography workshop at the Santa Fe Workshops in June 2010. You can get more info on that workshop on Page 7.

Lastly, a significant portion of this newsletter is littered with images from a recent assignment with Red Bull where I got to shoot with the famous Scottish trials rider Danny MacAskill. I have to say it was one of the most inspiring assignments I have had in a while and we got some amazing images in a span of fifteen hours. Danny and I both worked extremely hard to create these images - and I think it shows. You can check out a sampling of images from the assignment in a special portfolio starting on page 8. If you'd like to see a larger selection of images from that assignment visit the [Danny MacAskill project portfolio](#) on my website.

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Lowepro Ad running around the world with Michael Clark

SHOT BY MARK WATSON THE AD FEATURES LOWEPRO'S NEW TOPLOADER PRO AW SERIES

Some of you might have seen it already, but for those of you that haven't, the camera bag manufacturer Lowepro is running a full-page ad (at right) featuring myself and their new Toploader Pro AW camera bags in several photography magazines all over the world right now. It is already running in photo magazines in the UK and it will be running in *Outdoor Photographer* in the Jan/Feb issue as well as the issue after that here in the US I am told. Other magazines, both here in the USA and internationally, might end up running the ad over the course of the next six to eight months. My sincere thanks to Lowepro for promoting me and using an image shot by Mark Watson.

The image was shot while covering the [2009 Wenger Patagonian Expedition Race](#). At this point in the race, Mark Watson (fellow pro photographer), Lydia McDonald (writer) and myself hiked into the last trekking section of the race with a group of racers and we had a stellar adventure ourselves in one of the most remote and uncharted areas on the planet at the very southern tip of South America.

The print ad includes a [link](#) to a web page on the Lowepro website which talks a bit more about my experiences using the Toploader Pro 75 AW in Patagonia. On that web page readers can also download a [PDF with the full story on my adventures](#) covering the [2009 Wenger Patagonian Expedition Race](#) and how I used Lowepro's gear on that assignment. The PDF document is a revised and updated version of an article that first appeared in the Spring 2009 issue of this newsletter and includes more photos of myself using Lowepro's Toploader Pro 75 AW.

Here's a quote from me on the Lowepro site: "The Toploader Pro AW was put through its paces in some very harsh (i.e., wet) conditions—it did a great job of keeping my camera dry and providing quick access. The Toploader Pro 75 AW is the newest incarnation of

this chest pouch camera bag and it has since become one of my mainstay bags that goes almost everywhere because it is so versatile. I can use it as a chest pouch—as I did in Patagonia during the trekking section or as a fanny pack with a few extra lens cases, which is how I had it set up most for the rest of the race."

RECENT CLIENTS: Nikon, Red Bull, Black Diamond, Mont-Bell, Backpacker, Outdoor Photographer, Climbing Magazine, Mountain Travel Sobek and the Mentor Series Workshops.



Designed for the pro,
inside and out

Pro outdoor photographer Michael Clark shoots with our fast-access Toploader Pro™ 75 AW bag to capture every moment of the Wenger Patagonian Expedition Race.

Michael Clark puts our new toploading bag through its paces in Patagonia. Thanks to Lowepro's industry-first 360° working All Weather AW Cover™, he had quick access to his gear—even with the cover on—during this intense, ten-day race.

Pictured above: Michael Clark on the very southern edge of the Brunswick Peninsula, during the 2009 Wenger Patagonian Expedition Race.

Introducing the Toploader Pro AW series: Toploader Pro 65 AW, Toploader Pro 70 AW and Toploader Pro 75 AW (pictured).

lowepro

To learn more about Michael Clark's adventures in Patagonia and Lowepro's inventive design, as featured in the Toploader Pro AW series, please visit www.lowepro.com/patagonia

Adventure Photography Workshop

ADVENTURE SPORTS WORKSHOP IN SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO - JUNE 20-26, 2010



Adventure sports photography can be an adventure in itself, involving breathtaking locations, extreme conditions, and working with elite athletes in risky situations. It requires a host of skills, including technical excellence with the camera, familiarity with the sport, and the ability to keep your goals and safety in mind throughout.

Designed for intermediate to experienced photographers, this workshop concentrates on creating unique adventure sports and lifestyle images. We focus on four outdoor sports: rock climbing, whitewater kayaking, mountain biking, and trail running. Using elite athletes as our models and northern New Mexico's incredible landscape as our backdrop, we explore innovative ways to capture the essence of each sport. Topics covered during the week include research and preparation,

SANTA FE
photographic workshops

composition and camera angles, equipment selection and use, using natural light, fill flash, and battery-powered strobes, and autofocus techniques. We also learn how to work with

athletes who are putting themselves at risk and how to capture the intensity of the action. Each day finds us in a new location working with expert athletes.

Classroom time includes editing and critiquing images and one-on-one meetings with Michael. In addition, Michael shares his insights and experiences in the adventure marketplace, including career development, portfolios, and how to shoot for stock, editorial, and commercial clients.

This workshop is slated for the week of June 20-26, 2010 and is hosted by the [Santa Fe Workshops](http://SantaFeWorkshops.com). Check their website for registration info.

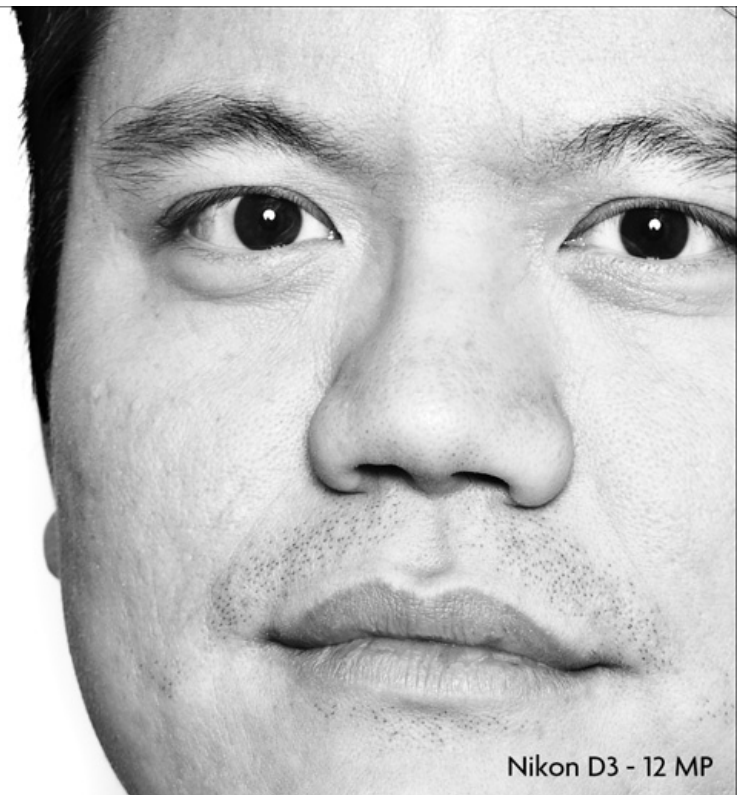
The 12 MP Nikon D3 vs. 39 MP Hasselblad H3D

A COMPARISON OF 35MM AND MEDIUM FORMAT DIGITAL IMAGING

Last month, in early October, I taught a workshop with Andy Biggs entitled [*Adobe Lightroom and the Fine Art Digital Print*](#). The workshop itself was a huge success with eighteen students. It was one of the best workshops I have taught in a long while. Andy and myself were quite a team and we worked really hard to give the participants as much as they could handle and

fifteen minutes and this equipment review is the result. This comparison is by no means a scientific analysis of these cameras - it is just my thoughts on shooting with the Hassey compared to the Nikon and the differences in image quality, which I thought my readers might be interested in.

First off, if you have ever wondered just how good



While the comparison is difficult to see in the example above, the image shot with the Hasselblad H3D (at 39 MP) on the left is considerably sharper and more detailed than the image on the right shot with the Nikon D3 (12 MP). That is no surprise to anyone with such a huge disparity in sensor resolution. Sadly, I was not able to shoot with a Nikon D3x which would have been a much more interesting comparison, but even so the Nikon D3 image file is no slouch.

even then a bit more. The workshop centered around shooting the Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta which is the largest ballooning festival in the world. It was a big hit as a photo op and everyone loved it.

During that workshop, while printing images for the students on the last day, I gave a lighting and portrait demonstration in the classroom. One of our students owned a complete Hasselblad H3D 39 MP system including seven of the eight lenses Hasselblad makes for that camera. Never one to pass up an opportunity to test out some new gear I shot with the Hassey for about

digital is these days, some of these higher end medium format cameras produce stunning clarity and resolution. Previously, I had shot with a 22 MP digital back on a Mamiya 645D. While it produced amazing images, they paled in comparison to those that came out of the H3D. At the start of my portrait demonstration I was shooting with a Nikon D3, which by all accounts is an incredible camera. When I switched to the H3D I was pleasantly surprised by the autofocus and it's ability to focus quickly and accurately even in poor light. My experiences with some other cameras, like the Mamiya

645D, were disappointing in terms of the autofocus. The H3D was easy to hand hold and it handled like a dream really. I was impressed.

Once I downloaded the huge files to my laptop and imported them into Lightroom, I was completely blown away by how sharp they were and the resolution compared to the meager 12 MP of the D3. My jaw literally went slack and I had to concentrate so as to keep from drooling on my laptop. And this is only 39 MP. I can only imagine what the latest Hasselblad H4D 60 MP images look like. Of course, it did take my laptop a few minutes just to import the Hasselblad images and create a preview. It was obvious that the file size was huge. But nonetheless, the resolution and overall image quality is as good as it gets currently.

In the end, the H3D obviously has the advantage when it comes to resolution, no doubt. And it was also obvious that the Nikon D3 had an anti-aliasing filter in front of the image sensor since the raw images were a bit soft when compared to the H3D images. The H3D has no anti-aliasing filter. But as experience has taught me getting a great shot is much more than just resolution and stunning technical image quality. The H3D shoots at a little less than one frame per second and it certainly does not have the incredible high ISO performance that the Nikon D3 or D700 has. As with everything else, it comes down to the right tool for the job. Sadly, I did not have a Nikon D3x to shoot with that day, which would have been a much more interesting comparison in terms of image quality. The H3D would have still had quite a bit more resolution but I am certain the Nikon D3x would have held it's own, especially at less than one-third the cost of the H3D setup.

As a pro, the overriding question is do we really need all those megapixels. For the average 8.5 x 11 print, I am not sure one could even tell the difference between the H3D and the Nikons. For a double-truck spread in a magazine, the higher resolution afforded by the H3D might result in a slightly sharper print, but even then it would only be a slight difference. For sports photographers, medium format digital isn't even an option as the framing rate isn't high enough for our needs. These cameras excel in the studio and for portraiture. If a client needs incredible resolution I wouldn't hesitate to rent the newer H4D. These Hasselblads truly are incredible machines and the image quality is unequalled by anything in the 35mm format.

ADOBE LIGHTROOM WORKFLOW

A COMPLETE WORKFLOW FROM CAPTURE
TO OUTPUT BY MICHAEL CLARK



NEED A CUTTING EDGE DIGITAL WORKFLOW? CURIOUS ABOUT ADOBE PHOTOSHOP LIGHTROOM AND HOW IT CAN SPEED UP YOUR DIGITAL WORKFLOW?

The Adobe Photoshop Lightroom Workflow, a 124 page PDF e-book, is a workshop in book form. This workflow, while not exhaustive, will cover the main topics of a shooting workflow then move into a RAW processing workflow with Adobe Lightroom 2.6 and Photoshop CS3/CS4.

To purchase *Adobe Photoshop Lightroom: A Professional Photographer's Workflow* click on the website link below. Payments can be made with any major credit card or via your PayPal account. For more information on the workflow and exactly what is covered go to Michael's website.

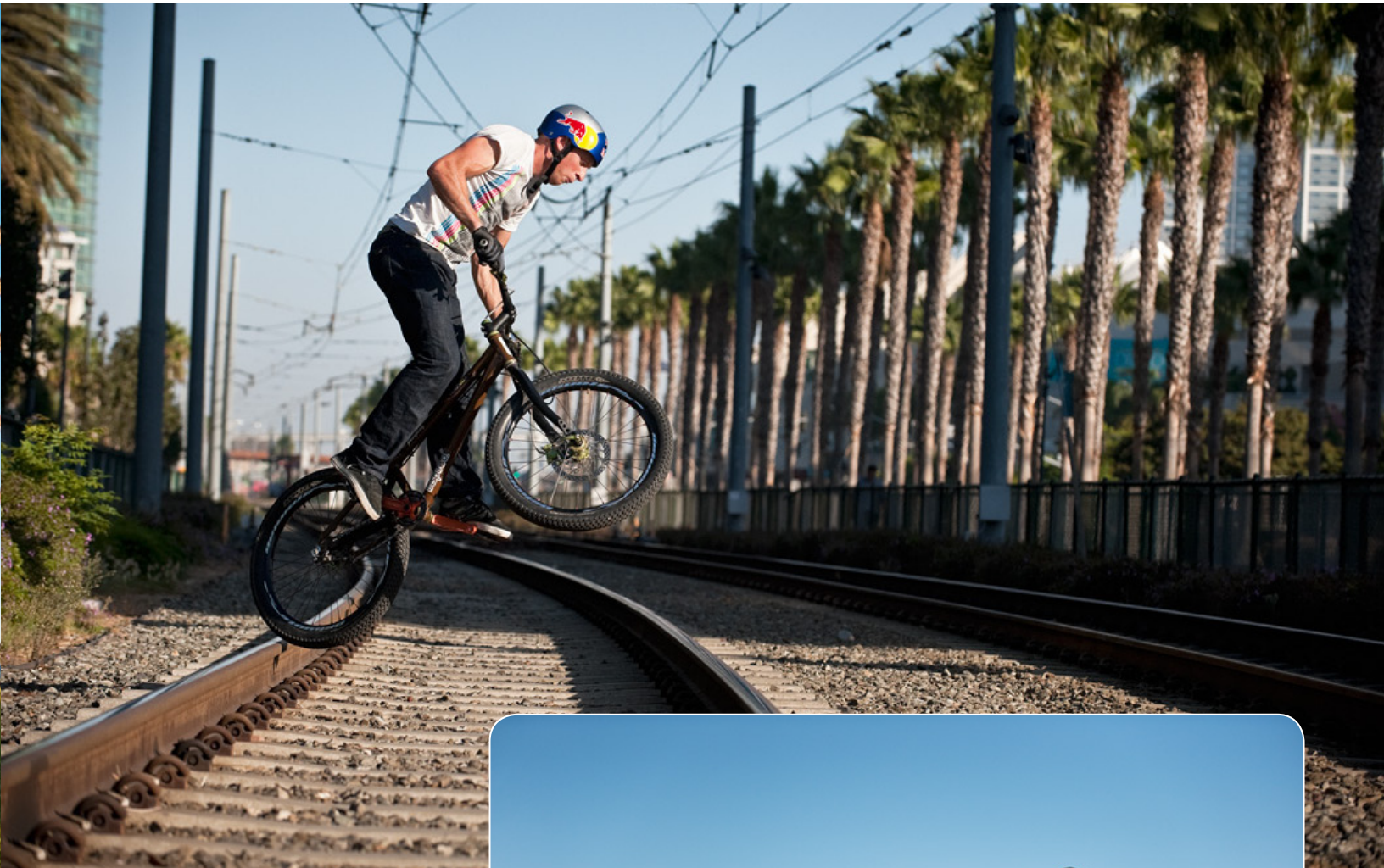
WWW.MICHAELCLARKPHOTO.COM



In late September I got the call from [Red Bull Photo-files](#) to shoot with Scottish rider [Danny MacAskill](#), a YouTube superstar and expert trials rider. In fact, Danny has his own style of riding that is hard to classify, he isn't just a trials rider, but his tricks are similar to trials riding with the caveat that they are usually done in urban areas and on a hybrid mountain bike that is built for his style of riding. If you visit YouTube even occasionally then the odds are good you have seen the [video](#) he and his roommate made which cast him into stardom and has gotten over 12 million hits! His story is the stuff of dreams really. He has been riding his bike since a young age, and became incredibly talented at

performing amazing and sometimes very dangerous tricks. Since his YouTube video, he has been featured in Volkswagen commercials, been asked to perform at professional football matches (Soccer games for the Americans) and also became a sponsored athlete with Red Bull among others, which was the reason for the photo shoot. All in all, he went from working in a Bike shop to being a full-time athlete who was so busy he started turning down gigs that would have paid him upwards of \$5,000 for a 20 minute demo.

Our shoot was planned for San Diego, California since Danny was in the US meeting with sponsors like Red Bull and other potential sponsors like Oakley. Since



neither of us had ever been to San Diego we spent the day before the shoot scouting locations and found some wild options. Through Ilanit Eisenberg at Red Bull, who was also the art director on the shoot, we set up an hour-long session on board the USS Midway - an aircraft carrier, now a museum, that was moored



Captions: Page 8 - Danny MacAskill doing a back flip off a sculpture in downtown San Diego, California. Page 9 - Top: Danny MacAskill jumping from one train track to the other in downtown San Diego, California. Bottom: Danny MacAskill taking a break on the USS Midway. Page 10: Danny MacAskill throwing a tail whip on the USS Midway aircraft carrier 60-feet above the flight deck near downtown San Diego, California. Page 11 - Top: Danny MacAskill doing a 360 onto and off a concrete picnic table. Bottom: Danny MacAskill jumping off a gazebo with downtown San Diego, California in the background.

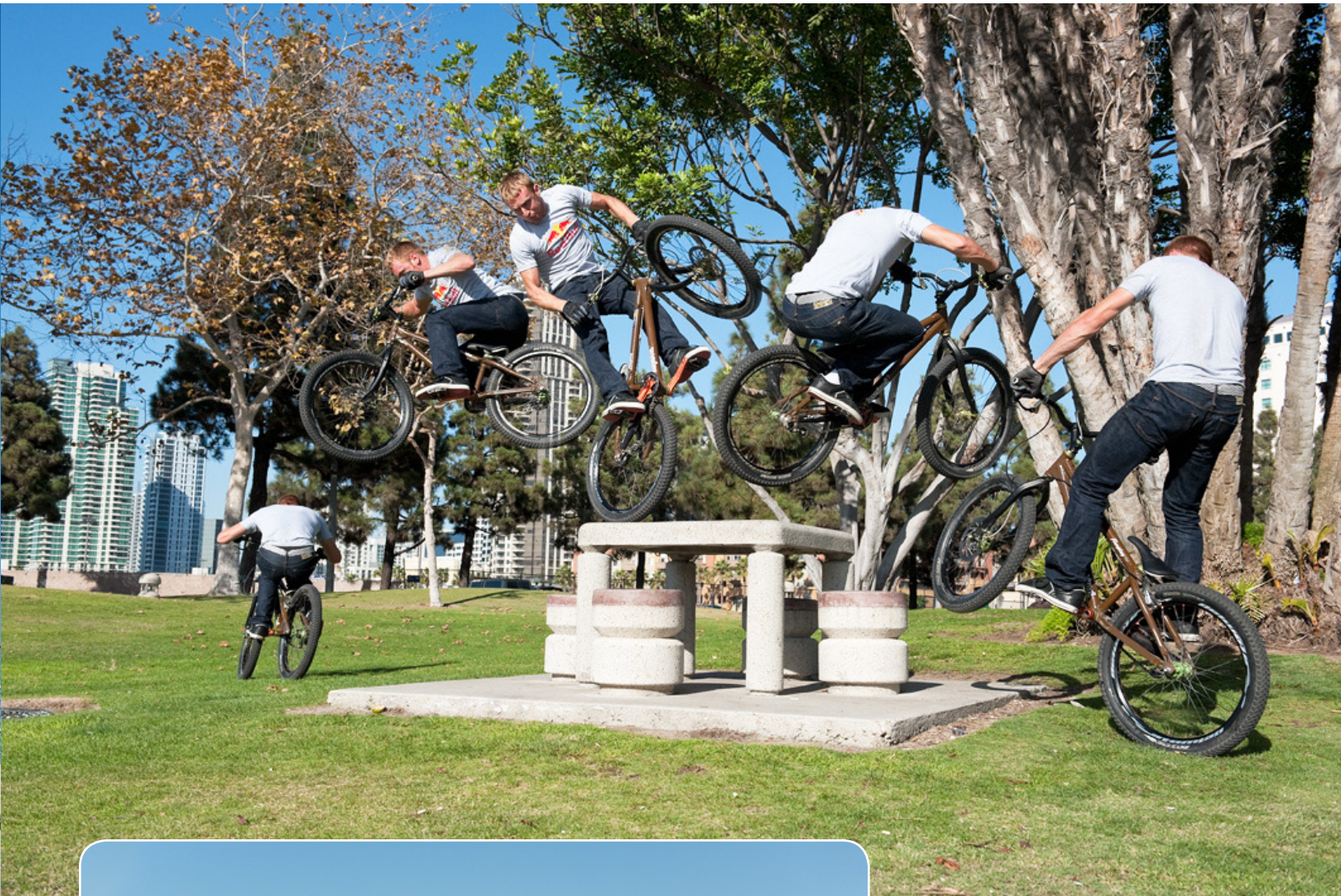


in the San Diego harbor. The USS Midway proved to be a great place for Danny to warm up. Of course we were prevented from doing anything too crazy since this was a museum. Though with a bit of luck and some sweet talking on Danny's part he did manage to pull off a few big stunts far above the flight deck (see the image above and on the cover).

We started shooting at around 5 AM and worked with only a few breaks for lunch and dinner until 10 PM that evening. It was a long day. Danny and I were both completely exhausted by the end of it. As you might expect, we had the cops called on us and got kicked out

of a few places. Luckily we had plenty of locations to shoot and we kept moving every hour or so to a new location.

My favorite location was the last one before dark, near the airport. There was a sculpture with a set of four rings that we found the day before and Danny thought he could do a back flip off one of them. This was, as they say, going to be the money shot. The light was perfect, but we were stuck in traffic so a bit of New Mexico driving was in order to get us close to the location in time. As Danny said, "It was the most exciting thing we did all day!" Once we got there Danny went



to work. It took about four or five tries to get the speed and trajectory just right but once he got it down he did at least a dozen back flips to the delight of those stuck in traffic. Heck, even a cop drove by and cheered him on. All in all, the shoot went about as well as it possibly could. I have to give kudos to Danny for working so hard. Obviously without his hard work these images wouldn't exist.

[PORTFOLIO]





Connecting with your Audience *by Michael Clark*

While watching U2 perform last month (October 20, 2009), I was completely awestruck by how they can capture an audience and connect with them on a level few rock bands ever have or ever will again. I was in Phoenix, Arizona, along with about 90,000 fellow U2 fans. Their stage was this lunar lander behemoth that rose pretty much to the top of the partially enclosed University of Phoenix stadium. The air was electric. The sound quality was stunning. The songs were anthems, and we were encouraged to participate in the show. In fact, I hesitate to call it a show. It wasn't. It was an event. And Bono used every bit of his passion and fervor to include us in the mix. The songs were used to inspire and prod. It was clear that the music was bigger than just the lyrics or the band. By the end of the concert, they managed to create an emotional

“THE AIR WAS ELECTRIC. THE SOUND QUALITY WAS STUNNING. THE SONGS WERE ANTHEMS, AND WE WERE ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SHOW.”

connection with the audience that left everyone reeling.

As an artist, who uses a camera instead of musical instruments, my mind went to work as they finished out the last encore. How do these guys do it? How do they make such a visceral, intense connection with their audience? The first thing that came to mind was that their songs are firmly connected with their beliefs and passions. It is no secret that three of the band members are Christians and that Bono's political motivations are to help the poor and needy in Africa and elsewhere. In recent years this has been the outpouring of their faith, and that is reflected in the songs. Hence, every Christian in some way has a connection with the band far beyond the songs. Secondly, passion is infectious. There is no facade with these guys. They come out and play their hearts out for two and half hours and involve the crowd. The passion on display for their causes is real. You can hear it in the songs, in their work. In a sense, the songs serve as anthems because they encourage you to sing along and become an activist in the cause whether it's about changing your life, coming to God, fighting oppression or poverty or helping to solve the AIDS crisis in Africa. The last part of this connection, that can't be underestimated is the quality of their work. It is top-notch. And even more to the point, it is consistently top-notch. That can't be understated. If the work wasn't good then no one would be there to celebrate it. Put it all together and you have a group that can deliver real and meaningful content, not just entertainment, in a live show.

Obviously it is going to be extremely difficult, nigh impossible, to create such an emotional response with photography. Live music by its nature is a different animal altogether. For a long time now I have been thinking that in this day and age, where the profession of photography is changing at an incredible pace, it might be wise to create a following beyond the clients that hire you for assignments. Of course, the fact that you are reading this article in my newsletter goes without saying that I

already have a following of some sort and continue to cultivate that audience. Many other pro photographers have done likewise including Chase Jarvis, Joe McNally and Vincent LaForet. They have used their blogs and their work to inspire, teach and inform with incredible success. But is that it? Is it possible to create an emotional connection with a photograph, with a photographer's work? I'd say yes, it is, but obviously not on par with a U2 concert. For example, look at the incredible images of James Nachtwey, that force one to deal with the atrocities going on around the world. Or look at the

extremely well - which will lead to very insightful images. Second, your work has to be top-notch. If you can't communicate effectively with your chosen media then it is harder for the message to get through. Hence, the better the work, the easier it is for others to get excited about it. It is obvious that U2 works really hard on their craft. They don't just sit around lazily and throw a few songs - or their tours - together. They work at it incredibly hard. If you expect to really connect with the viewer (especially photo editors who have seen it all) then you are going to have to apply yourself by

working harder, smarter and longer than the next guy. This is all part of refining and pushing your craft so it can be top-notch. And it all ties into how passionate and driven you are. If you know me personally then you know I am an extremely passionate person who can't contain himself. My newsletter alone is proof of that.

The hardest thing for a photographer to convey through their images is their message - if there is one. As photographers, our voice is our images. What do they say? Do they convey our beliefs? Our Passion? Is that message one that will connect with others? As an adventure photographer, my images aren't helping anyone avert the AIDS crisis in Africa. But, on



U2 performing under their incredible stage in Phoenix, AZ on October 20, 2009. This images was shot with an iPhone during the concert. To check out some video clips from the concert follow the links provided at the end of the article.

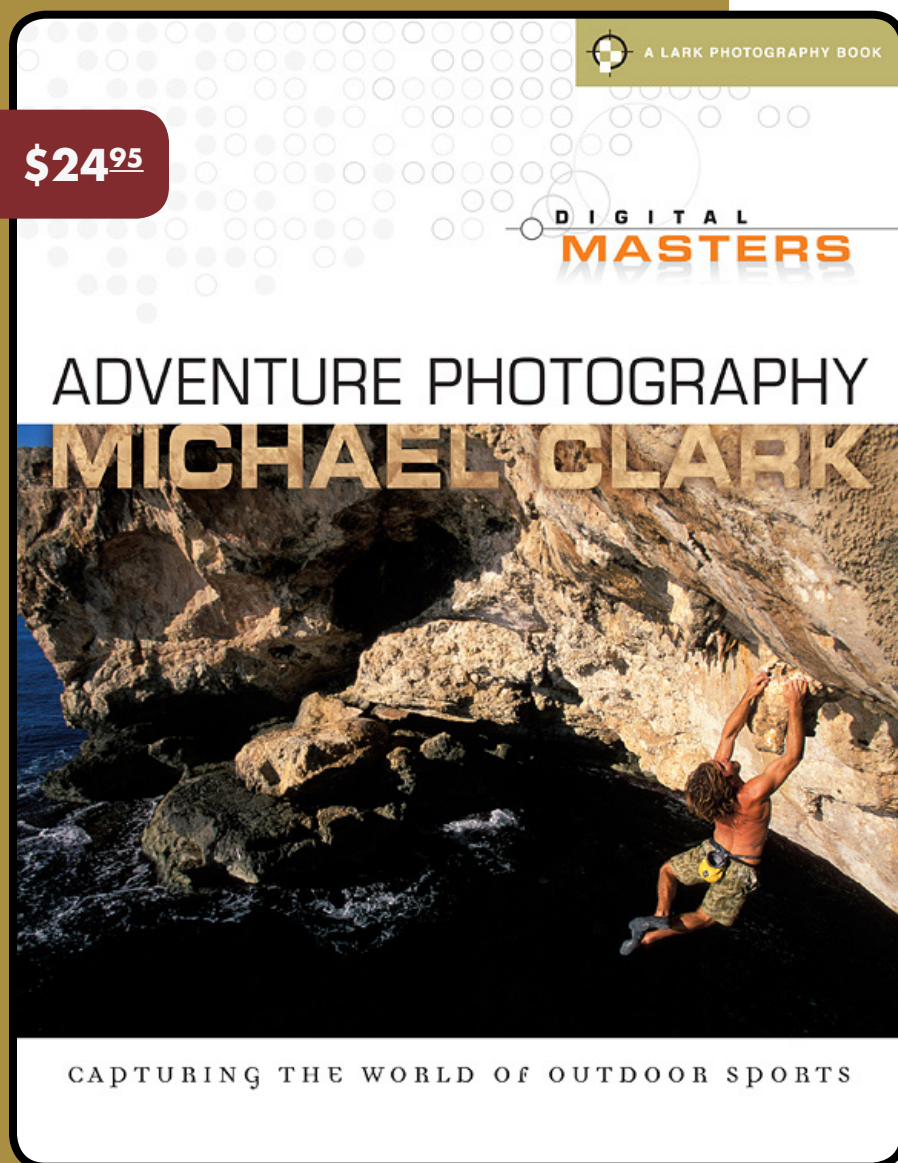
images of melting glaciers shot by James Balog and his crew at the Extreme Ice Survey. Those images show us with visual data how fast our climate is changing and hopefully motivate us to change our everyday habits that might be part of the problem.

Looking over my notes on how U2 was able to connect with their fans at that concert, there are some clear cut correlations that can be adapted for the photographer looking to connect with people through their images. First, and this is no surprise, passion reigns supreme. If you are passionate about your photography and what you photograph that will come through. Usually when people are passionate about something they are deeply committed. And this means they understand that topic

a smaller level, I hope that my images of elite athletes help inspire others to take a few risks and get out of their comfort zone, to expand their world view and have an adventure that gives them a new perspective. During the concert, I was inspired to take my work even further by shooting for some NGOs I have worked with and believe in -- and ones that can use my images to get others motivated and contributing to positive changes in Burma and Thailand specifically. And all of my adventure skills will be needed to create those images. More to come on that at a later date but the ball is already rolling. If you'd like to see some video clips shot with an iPhone from the concert you can view them on my blog [here](#). Enjoy!

DIGITAL MASTERS:
ADVENTURE PHOTOGRAPHY
Capturing the world of Outdoor Sports

JUST RELEASED & IN STORES!!!



Digital Masters: Adventure Photography is part of a series of photography books written by highly acclaimed photographers who are leaders in their diverse specialties, the Digital Masters series provides the expertise necessary for creating successful, well-executed images. These unique books take you on the road, in the studio, and on the job with some of today's most talented image-makers who provide insight into how they think, work, and shoot. Novice and seasoned photographers alike will find inspiration for cultivating creativity and essential information.

This book details the ins and outs of creating top-notch adventure sports images. As far as I can tell there are no other books out there that even come close to covering as much ground as this book does. In fact there are few if any books

that specifically talk about photographing adventure sports at all. I have basically downloaded everything I have learned about shooting adventure sports over the last 14 years as a full-time pro into this book. Some of the topics covered in the book include: equipment, outdoor gear, adventure photography fundamentals, artificial lighting, how I approach and shoot each of the main adventure sports, portraiture and lifestyle photography as well as what it takes to be a pro. The book also includes in-depth interviews with photographer Corey Rich and *National Geographic Adventure* photo editor Sabine Meyer - and a whole lot more.

DESCRIPTION FROM LARK BOOKS:

As one of the world's most respected adventure photographers, Clark offers sage advice—gained from years of hard-earned experience—on equipment, techniques, and the specific skills required to get in on the action. Learn to capture fast-moving subjects and deal with harsh conditions and horrible weather—even when you're hanging from ropes and riggings in a squall. Of special interest is the Portraiture and Lifestyle chapter, which covers increasingly in-demand techniques.

ORDER THE BOOK ONLINE AT:

Click on logos for link

amazon.com

BARNES & NOBLE



Red Bull athlete Danny MacAskill doing a back flip off a sculpture near downtown San Diego, California.
Nikon D700, ISO 200, Nikkor AF-S 17-35mm f/2.8, Sandisk Extreme IV 8 GB CF Card