

NEWSLETTER

# MICHAEL CLARK

PHOTOGRAPHY



FALL 2021



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FALL 2021 NEWSLETTER

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*Cover Image: Mike Shinabery in an Astronaut suit at White Sands National Monument in Alamogordo, New Mexico. Opposite Page: Mike Shinabery's footprint from his Astronaut suit at White Sands National Monument in Alamogordo, New Mexico.*









## editorial

# Cosmic Correlations

*Photographing Physicists and Astronauts on recent assignments*

**T**his Fall issue of the Newsletter is just squeaking in before winter but nevertheless I wanted to get another issue out there before the snow starts accumulating. Throughout Covid, both with the Newsletter and with postings on social media, specifically Instagram, it has been tough to post new images and content due to every assignment having embargoes. I am constantly trying to figure out what images I can actually post and when the embargoes are lifted. I suppose that is a good problem to have but it does mean that the Newsletter is published when I am able to talk about certain assignments these days and not according to the season.

So far, 2021 has included a wide array of assignments ranging from high-stakes action (i.e. skydiving and aerial stunts) to composited portraits. As shown on the following page, I had the honor of photographing Sean Carroll, a renown physicist and the latest addition to the Santa Fe Institute. As a cosmologist, whose theories are deeply embedded in space and time, it is challenging to come up with an image that communicates the deeply theoretical nature of his work—and the intense math behind it. As someone who got a B.S. in physics, it was pretty amazing to get this assignment as well. To create this image I combined a photograph of a three-dimensional art installation—found in the lobby of the Institute—with a straight on portrait of Sean. This required some serious scouting

and forethought as to how I could create the composite. It worked out as you can see on the following page, and even better, Sean liked the final image.

On another assignment, I was lucky enough to photograph a replica Astronaut suit in White Sands National Park for New Mexico Tourism. This is the feature article in this issue of the Newsletter. This assignment resulted in some oddly amazing images, both comical in some ways and ridiculously cool in other ways (like the image that graces the cover of this issue).

As I don't have any new camera gear to review, I have included in this issue an article on the advantages of mirrorless cameras and how those new features allow us to create images that were difficult or impossible to create with DSLRs. Thanks again for checking out the Newsletter. Here's hoping you enjoy this issue and it offers up an escape for an hour or two. Until next time....

*Opposite Page: A composite portrait of renown Physicist Sean Carroll created for the Santa Fe Institute in Santa Fe, New Mexico.*

**Recent Clients:** Red Bull, Fujifilm, National Geographic, New Mexico Tourism, Santa Fe Institute, Colorado Tourism, Highlight Skydiving Team, Yeti and Talweg Creative.





## Annual Fine Art Print Sale

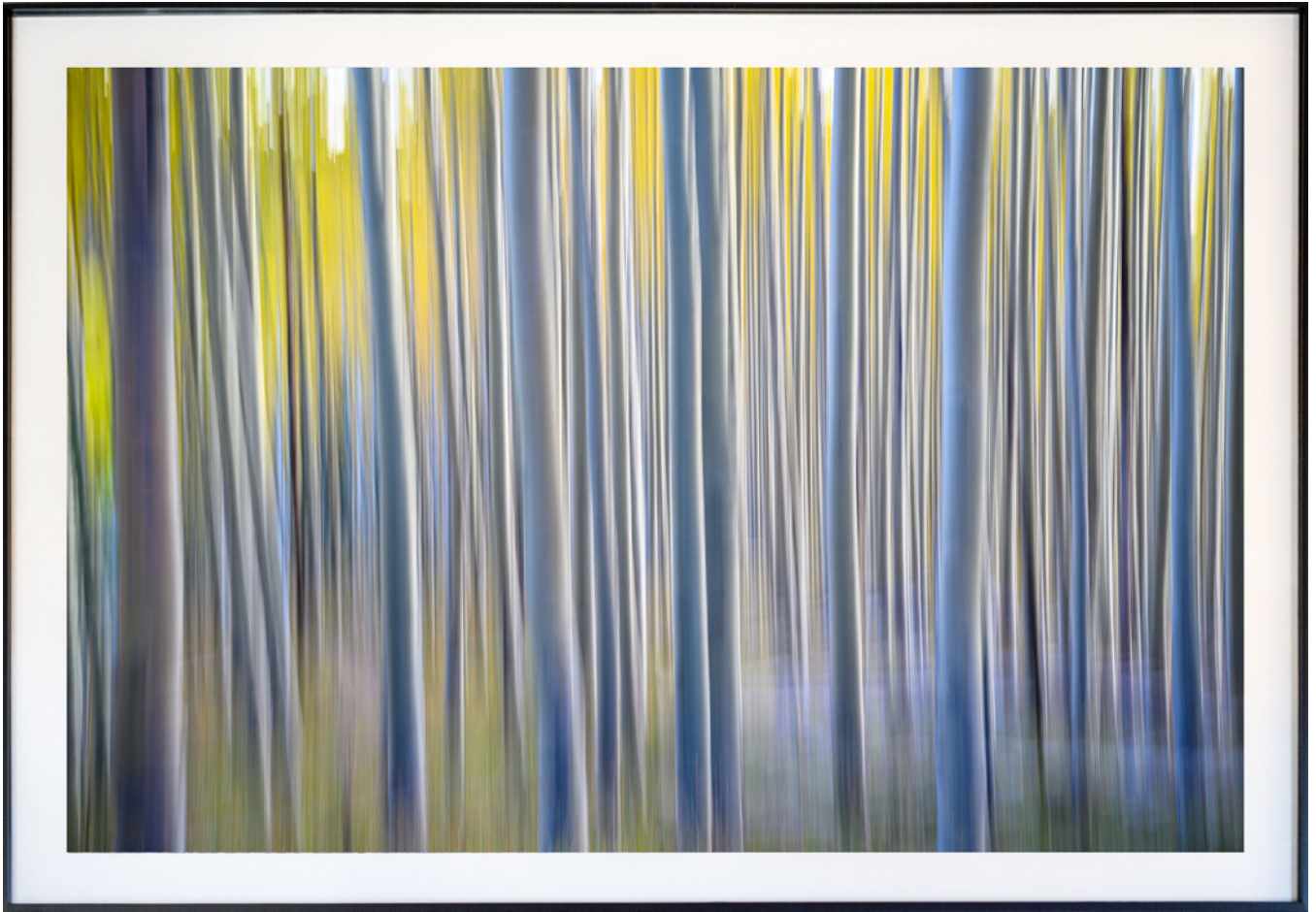
*15% off of any Fine Art Print through December 31st, 2021*



To get the ball rolling for the fall holiday season, I am happy to announce a 15% off sale on all of my fine art prints until December 31st, 2021. How this works is very simple, just take 15% off my standard fine art print pricing, which can be found [here on my website](#), and [contact me](#) to order the print. This sale includes both paper

prints and metal prints. Also, note that my print pricing includes free shipping (in the continental USA) as well as print mounting on DiBond (for paper prints). All metal prints come ready to hang on the wall.

All of my images are available as Fine Art Prints. You can



see which of my images are in the [Limited Edition](#) category on my website. Any images that are not shown on the Limited Edition page are considered Open Edition prints. Available print sizes are listed on the pricing page. I will work with you to make sure the final print is the best it can possibly be and will look great mounted on your wall. All paper prints are made on the finest baryta photographic papers.

Above is a sample paper print (framing not included) that I have made in the last few months to give you an idea of just how stunning these turn out when framed up.

Also, the metal prints I am offering, printed by Blazing

Editions, are absolutely stunning as well and are also on sale. Just as with the paper prints, all of my metal prints come mounted (as they are printed directly on the metal) and additionally they come with a backing or frame so that they can be hung on the wall straight out of the box. A few examples of how the metal prints can be mounted are shown on my [website](#). The metal prints are absolutely stunning, especially in the larger sizes and since these are already mounted and ready to hang on the wall they also save a lot of money that would be spent on framing.

Please [contact me](#) with any questions, to order a print or if you would like to look at a wider range of images than are featured on my website.



## workshops

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# Photography Workshops

*An overview of workshops and online classes with Michael Clark*

**E**ach year I teach a few workshops on a variety of topics including adventure sports photography, digital workflow and artificial lighting. Below is a listing of the workshops I will be teaching in 2021 and 2022. With Covid still ravaging the World, my workshops are a mix of in-person and online sessions depending on the workshop, the location and the current state of the Pandemic. Hopefully Omicron won't shut everything down again and most folks will have received the vaccine before the virus mutates further. For more information on these workshops, and to find out how to register, go to the [Workshops](#) page on my blog or click on the links in the descriptions below.

### ONE-ON-ONE VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS

*Online via Skype or Zoom*

*Email [info@michaelclarkphoto.com](mailto:info@michaelclarkphoto.com) to Schedule*

With the Covid-19 virus running freely here in the USA, I am doing quite a few online tutorials and workshops. If you would like to set up a one-on-one Skype or Zoom session to discuss any photography related topics please [contact](#) me. From portfolio reviews to digital workflow, lighting techniques and career development and anything in between we can set up a session and cover whatever you want. If you have any questions about these sessions please don't hesitate to reach out. I have found that we

can cover a wide variety of topics in these one-on-one sessions and well, like many of my peers, at the moment I have a lot more time to give than normal.

Pricing for online sessions starts at \$100/hour and discounts apply for multiple hour sessions.

### DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY WORKFLOW

*Nobechi Creative*

*Online via Zoom*

*December 4 - 5 and 11 - 12, 2021*

Digital photography is far more complicated than shooting film ever was. Knowing the best practices for a digital workflow will make you a better photographer. A complete digital workflow is also much more than just how you work up your images. How you set up the camera, expose the image, color manage your monitor and your work environment, as well as how you fine-tune and print that image all have an effect on your final output. In this workshop, we will cover the entire digital workflow process step-by-step so you can understand exactly what it takes to create the best possible images. At the end of this incredibly detailed, far-ranging course, participants will know more about a complete digital workflow than many working professional photographers. Across the two parts of this course Michael covers equipment



*A narrow slot canyon just off the East Burr Trail Road in Long Canyon in the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in southern Utah. With digital photography the color management and your digital workflow have a massive effect on the final results. To dial in your workflow check out my online course below.*

selection, best practices for a shooting workflow, from setting up your camera to understanding histograms and exposure option, how to clean the sensor on your DSLR or mirrorless camera, a fully color-managed workflow including your work environment, monitor choice and monitor calibration, a deep dive into processing your images in Adobe Lightroom Classic CC, finalizing your images in Adobe Photoshop CC, making fine art prints, choosing your printer, paper, and understanding ICC profiles, and the basics of backing up your images, storage options and strategies, and much more!

This online course via Zoom will cover a complete array of topics concerning digital workflow for photographers seeking to create the best possible image quality. Note that we will be working with both Adobe Lightroom Classic CC and Photoshop CC.

Both parts of this course are appropriate for anyone from novice digital shooters to professionals who want to improve efficiencies in their workflow, color calibration and printing techniques. This is the most comprehensive, detailed digital photography workflow online offering out

there. In addition, the class size is small for an online workshop, allowing plenty of opportunity to ask Michael questions, and the video recordings allow for participants flexibility for missed sessions.

Price: Part I (Standalone): \$450 per person and Part II (Standalone): \$450 per person or both Parts I & II: \$775 per person (\$125 off). It is **highly recommended** that you sign up for both parts 1 and 2 if you want to learn a complete workflow.

For more information and to register for this workshop visit the [Nobechi Creative](#). Note that all payment will go through Nobechi Creative, which is based in Japan.

## **JAPAN: THE ART OF MOTION**

*Nobechi Creative - Multiple Locations in Japan*

*May 2022*

*Instructors: Michael Clark and George Nobechi*

Not just a travel photo tour, not just a lighting workshop, but a unique opportunity to photograph Japan in Motion: Martial artists, theatre performers, bullet trains and festivals to create a strong, dynamic body of work that will have your friends and colleagues in awe of your photography, while learning invaluable lighting techniques courtesy of Michael, and diving deeply into the beautiful Japanese culture through George.

Japan is a country constantly on the move. With the fastest bullet trains in the world, and sports old and new, there are ample opportunities to create ambitious images of both the modern and ancient Japanese culture in motion. In this photography workshop with Michael Clark and George Nobechi we will push ourselves to create

dynamic images that impart motion into the world of still photography. Using advanced lighting techniques\*\*\* with both strobes and continuous lights (not to worry if you are new to lights—Michael and George will be there to help you), incorporating motion blur, and featuring incredible athletes and martial artists we will set up a wide variety of scenarios to produce stunning images.

Michael has spent the entirety of his career capturing images of athletes in motion in remote locations for some of the most prestigious clients in the World including Apple, Nike, Nikon, Fujifilm, Red Bull, Nokia, National Geographic, Sports Illustrated and many more. In Japan we will adapt his techniques to a wide variety of traditional sports, performances, culture and events in stunning locations. The aim of this workshop is to craft images that are dramatic, unusual and out of the norm—images that stand out and grab the viewer's attention but are unmistakably Japanese.

We will start with a few days in Tokyo, where we have access to some phenomenal athletes and performing artists in a variety of venues. For the second part of the workshop we will head out into the beautiful Japanese countryside and work with martial artists, dancers and traditional performers. In addition we will have the opportunity to photograph an exhilarating festival, where we will be able to take the techniques we have learned and use them in an uncontrolled environment. Throughout the workshop we will have plenty of time to really get creative and explore the possibilities in each location.

Of course, throughout the workshop, Michael will also share his extensive knowledge of digital workflow and show participants how he works up his images to a very





*Image from the Fushimi Inari Taisha near Kyoto, Japan. Even though we won't be going to the Fushimi Inari Taisha, Japan offers some incredible photographic opportunities and in Japan: The Art of Motion workshop we will explore the possibilities of capturing athletes, martial artists and actors performing in the landscape.*

high level. Each day will find us on location capturing powerful images in addition to image critiques, discussions on various techniques, and thinking through the types of images we hope to create that day. Michael first visited Japan in May of 2019 and enjoyed the country so much he immediately hatched the idea to coordinate with George on creating this unique workshop. George, with his extensive knowledge of Japan, and its culture, will be our guide to help us stay true to the traditions and also dial in our experience so that we not only come away with incredible images but also get to experience a side of Japan that is rarely seen by tourists. George will also instruct you in filling out your Japan portfolio with carefully

crafted landscapes, environmental portraits and still-life shooting around the main workshop photography led and taught by Michael.

Class size: 6 people (Minimum 5 people required for the class to proceed -- Note that this workshop has already met its minimum.) All lighting will be provided by Elinchrom Japan.

Cost: TBD

For more information and to register for this workshop visit the [Nobeichi Creative website](#).

## Workshop Testimonials

"Michael certainly knows his stuff. From Capture to Print: The Complete Digital Photographer's Workflow is delivered in an easy to follow and comprehensive manner that covers many things that you may not expect - such as how to choose proper lighting to view and evaluate your prints or what color shirt to wear when you're correcting images. I really appreciated that this is a pro workflow course delivered by a pro photographer. Michael is also a superb teacher, a superb communicator, who is welcoming and inviting of questions from all his participants. I took this workshop in June of 2020, using Zoom software. I was really amazed by how Michael made it seem like he's been doing these workshops forever this way! Thank you Michael! It was a great pleasure being part of this workshop with so many other amazing photographers and a great pleasure to meet you. I learned much which is valuable to me and enjoyed doing so at the same time. And just to reiterate, as to the workshop: I'm impressed." - Stephen Starkman, Toronto

"Michael is the best instructor I have taken a workshop from." - Participant, Cutting-Edge Lighting Workshop

"Michael set an incredibly high bar for his workshop. He gave 110%, covered a broad range of topics and did an outstanding job." - Chris Council, Adventure Photography Workshop

"Within the short time I've been studying and practicing photography, I have had teachers who are good educators, but not great photographers, and vice versa, but few who are both. Count yourself in these narrow ranks. I went through four years of college and several careers

getting less candid advice and encouragement than I got in four days with you. For what it is worth, thank you for that." - Brandon McMahon, Adventure Photography Workshop

"Thanks for running such a great workshop. I couldn't have chosen better photo shoot locations, and the post-shoot critiques were invaluable. It's the first time I've had my work reviewed, and I learned a ton from each session. While I didn't go into the workshop expecting to pick-up too many marketing and business tips, I've come out of last week inspired to set-up my photo website in earnest." - Jeff Hylok, Adventure Photography Workshop

"Priceless chance to learn from the absolute best. Every photographer should take this class!" - Jill Sanders, The Professional Photographer's Digital Workflow available on CreativeLIVE

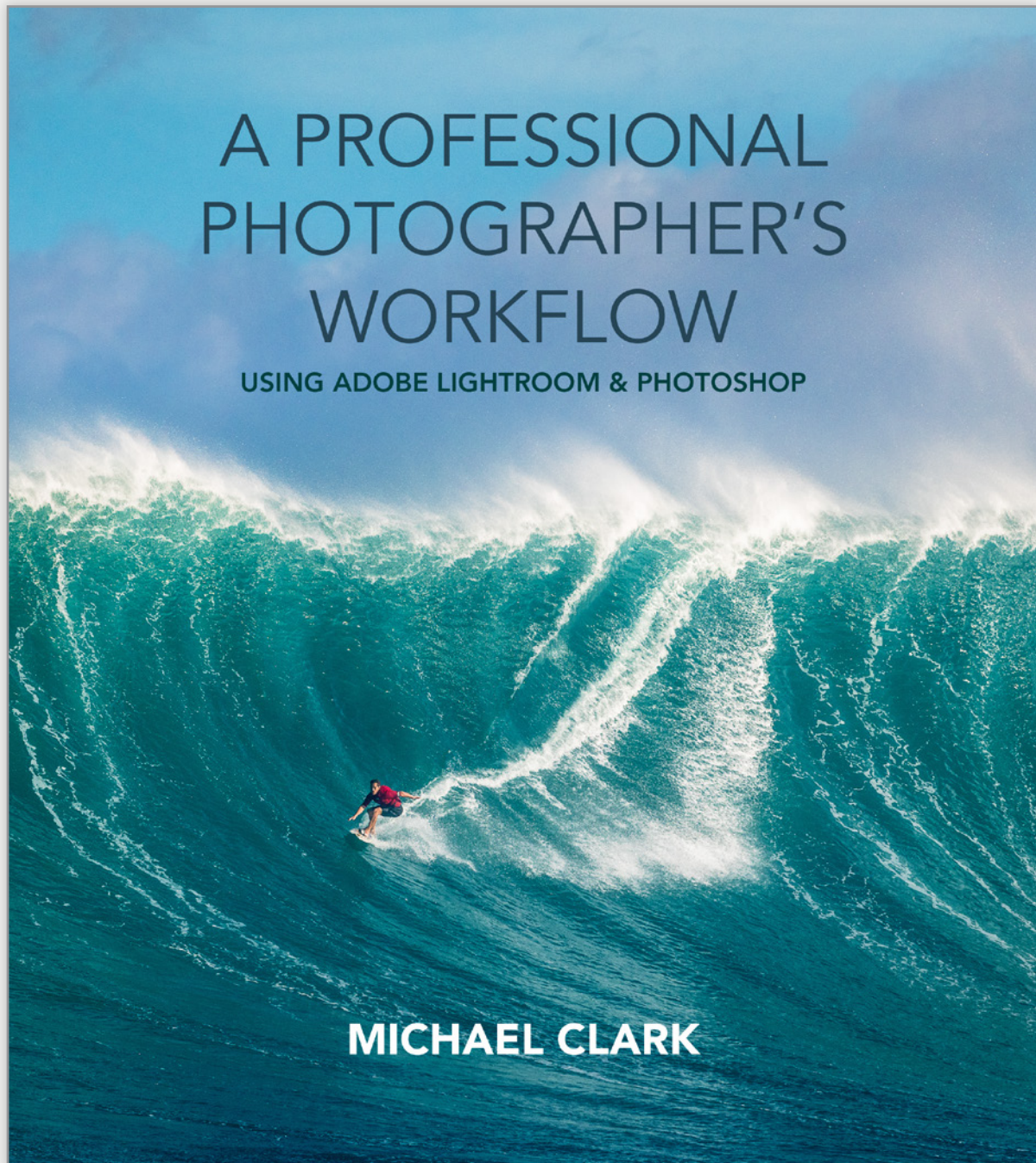
"Michael is a true professional and readily explains all of the nitty gritty issues of a photographer's digital workflow, including important things like Color Management, Lightroom workflows, Printing, and more. He has a thorough knowledge and passion that he loves to share. He can get way deep into the subject, which I found fascinating. You can tell Michael has great experience in teaching and also likes to learn from his students. He is very authentic, honest, and direct. I highly recommend this class, and look forward to another one of Michael's courses in the future!" - Kristen, The Professional Photographer's Digital Workflow on CreativeLIVE

For more information on my upcoming workshops, or to read more testimonials, please visit the [Workshops](#) page on my blog. Hope to see you at a workshop here soon!



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# An Epic Year for Camera Technology

*2021: The year that mirrorless cameras fully came of age*



This year, 2021, will go down as the year mirrorless camera technology truly came of age and truly replaced digital SLRs. At this point, I suspect DSLRs are still the mainstay of many professional photographers but with the incredible announcements of the Sony A1, the FUJIFILM GFX 100S, the Canon R3 and the Nikon Z 9 pretty much across the board every camera company has a stellar option for those looking to upgrade. Back in February of this year I published a blog post entitled, [Tools of the Trade: Transition Mode](#), where I started off that post with the following:

“2021 is the year that everyone in the photo industry will sit up and take notice of the mirrorless cameras that have been flooding the market for the last decade. It has taken a decade for the new mirrorless options to finally match the venerable speed-demon pro-caliber DSLRs that we have all been using as professionals. I am sure many would say this happened a few years back but for pros

who get to know their gear over years and years of use, a change in the system is a huge deal. With the back-to-back announcements of the Sony A1 and the FUJIFILM GFX 100S, 2021 kicked off with a bang announcing two new high-end cameras that show what is possible with mirrorless technology. With these two camera announcements, I have sold off my entire Nikon DSLR setup including all of my Nikkor F-mount lenses.”

That blog post was purely predicting that all professional photographers would finally start making the move to mirrorless after the launch of the Sony A1 and the FUJIFILM GFX 100s. I knew the Nikon Z 9 was coming (since Nikon told us long in advance it was in the works) but had no idea what it would become. Now that the Z 9 has officially been announced we can see that every top camera manufacturer has a mirrorless option for pretty much any genre of photography, including sports and wildlife photographers. Since selling off my DSLRs, I have been



*This image was created while on an assignment for MARSOC, the US Marine Special Forces. For the entire assignment I captured images handheld in crazy low-light conditions at ISO 6,400 and above—working with shutter speeds around 1/10th second at f/1.4. IBIS was the only reason I was able to get sharp images.*

working predominantly with my FUJIFILM GFX cameras (the GFX 100 and GFX 100S) as well as the Nikon Z 6 and the Z 7 II. Earlier this year I was pondering a move to Sony or Canon (in terms of full-frame cameras) if Nikon could not come through with the Z 9 but it appears that Nikon came through with a stellar new camera offering for pro photographers. I do have a Z 9 on order, and I am excited to again have a stellar medium format and 35mm set up to cover fast action and ultra high-end image quality. The GFX system is my main camera system (and has

been since the release of the GFX 100) but I still need a smaller 35mm format kit that can deal with crazy fast action as well. Hence, with my move to mirrorless cameras the focus in this article will be on how these cameras have improved overall image quality and what they allow us to capture that we couldn't create with DSLRs.

**In-Body Image Stabilization (IBIS):** IBIS has been in mirrorless cameras for a while now. IBIS is stabilization built into the sensor mechanism itself via magnets that hold

the sensor in place and stabilize the actual sensor. This amazing technology allows photographers to handhold high-resolution cameras at incredibly slow shutter speeds and still get sharp images—as shown on the previous page in an image created for the US Marine Special Forces. I have been able to handhold my mirrorless cameras with this feature at 1/10th second and get reliably sharp images. All of the major high-end mirrorless cameras announced in 2021 have this feature. Going forward, I would be surprised to see any mirrorless camera not having IBIS built in. This is a critical feature in my mind for any mirrorless camera.

**Better Image Quality:** This is a key part of the reason to go with mirrorless cameras. If the image quality isn't better than the DSLR cameras of yore then what would be the point? The Nikon D850 was such a stellar camera that it took a while to better it in the mirrorless space. The new mirrorless cameras and lenses allow for sharper images corner-to-corner than their DSLR cousins. The built-in lens profiles that work with Lightroom and Capture One also improve the image quality as well. As noted above, the stabilization (IBIS and lens stabilization) also allow for sharper images over a wider array of shutter speeds. The FUJIFILM GFX medium format cameras notably take image quality to a higher level at much more affordable prices than ever before. As the image on the following page shows, the 102 MP medium format sensors in the FUJIFILM GFX 100 and GFX 100s offer image quality that is a big step up from any 35mm camera at this point. Note that this image (on the next page) is a vertical crop from a horizontal image and the vertical image is still around 60 MP!

**Higher Quality Mirrorless Lenses:** The new lenses

designed for these new mirrorless camera systems are a big part of the image quality gains. Shorter flange distances, newly designed optics with modern technology, and the lens profiles that help correct those lenses are all part of the equation. The camera companies are also looking to the future when even higher resolution sensors will be put into cameras and the new lenses will need to keep up with those sensors as well.

**Built-in Lens Profiles:** We have mentioned lens profiles a few times already so I thought I would list it here again. Basically, all of the camera manufacturers have created profiles of their lenses and have shared these with Adobe and other software manufacturers so that these can be used to correct minor issues that pop up with every lens. These profiles help to correct things like aberrations, including chromatic aberration, as well as vignetting and other optical issues. The end result is that we get better images due to a combination of the improved optical quality of the lenses and the related lens profiles.

**Faster and More Accurate Autofocus:** The autofocus on most high-end DSLRs was already pretty fast, but the top-end mirrorless cameras have been able to use faster processors to calculate autofocus incredibly accurately at up to 120 times per second or faster in some cases. The new mirrorless cameras, because there is no mirror, can also use machine learning to track the eyes of your subject, or the subject itself with incredible accuracy far beyond the AF systems built into DSLRs. And all of the AF calculations are done on the sensor itself, which insures accurate autofocus in a way never before possible. Gone are the days of fine-tuning the autofocus of DSLRs to make sure they focus accurately with your lenses. Because the AF is done on the sensor the manufacturing









*This image, created for the launch of the FUJIFILM GFX 100 back in 2019, showed me the incredible image quality of Fujifilm's new 102 MP sensor and their amazing GF lenses. Only Hasselblad and Phase One have cameras that can match this image quality but neither of them are as versatile as the GFX cameras.*

variations between lenses is irrelevant—at least in terms of the autofocus. This new AF technology, along with IBIS and better image quality, are the big three reasons to move to mirrorless.

**Decoupling the AF point from the Composition:** One of

the big advances in the new AF technology is that there are AF points from corner-to-corner across the viewfinder. Because of this, we are now finally free to compose the image as we want without any AF restrictions. This is a huge benefit. Additionally, with eye tracking and the new subject tracking algorithms, in many instances we barely

even have to think about the AF at all since many mirrorless cameras have exceptional AF accuracy even in challenging light.

**Truly Silent Operation:** With modern mirrorless cameras we now have full and truly silent operation, save for the noise made by the autofocus moving lens elements back and forth. This is achieved using the electronic shutter option available in most mirrorless cameras. The Nikon Z 9 is the first pro-caliber mirrorless camera that does away with the shutter mechanism altogether. In fact it is a silent camera by default and you can turn on the sound to simulate a camera with a shutter. While a silent camera may not seem like a big deal, in many situations it will allow photographers to capture images without disturbing the subject such as in wildlife photography and photojournalism. Imagine a press briefing without all the annoying shutter mechanisms clacking away from the still photographers. Imagine a tennis match where the players don't have to hear all of those cameras firing away as they try to line up their next shot? Silent cameras will quickly become the defacto standard and I would not be surprised to see them required at major events where sound is an issue (tennis, golf, press events and so on).

**Live Histogram and WYSIWYG:** Mirrorless cameras from a decade ago included the live histogram in the viewfinder and pretty much all of the current mirrorless cameras allow for the histogram to be visible in the EVF or on the rear LCD. While this isn't new, it is incredibly valuable and makes capturing well exposed images much, much easier than it was with DSLRs. Of course, beyond the live histogram, the what-you-see-is-what-you-get (WYSIWYG) EVF viewfinders also help massively when it comes to dialing in your exposure. These

features not only help to get accurate exposures but they also help to dial in a creative effect using exposure settings. In some scenarios underexposing or overexposing the image helps to create the mood you want to convey better than the most accurate exposure and being able to see that instantly in the EVF is a huge help for translating your intent into the final image.

**Faster Frame Rates:** Once the mirror was removed from the camera, and faster processors were introduced, the ability to speed up the frame rates in mirrorless cameras jumped drastically. The Sony A1, released earlier this year, notably pushed that envelope to a shocking 30 fps at 50 MP. Of course, for most of us, even sports photographers like myself, 20 fps, much less 30 fps, creates a digital workflow nightmare. It is great to have these options, but realistically, I can make do with 12 to 14 fps and occasionally will bump up to that 20 fps when absolutely needed. Regardless, the new crop of super fast cameras open up new options we have never seen before in any cameras thus far.

While each of these points on their own may have a small (or large) impact on how you use a camera to create images, put together they change the photographic experience substantially—especially for anyone coming from the world of DSLRs. Note that I am not trying to sell anyone a mirrorless camera. I am just laying out my experiences and the advantages I see in working with the latest technology—and my reasoning for selling off my DSLRs.

I will admit getting used to an EVF takes a little while, but with time it becomes very difficult to go back to a DSLR. This was the experience I had when I purchased the Nikon Z 6 way back in 2018 and then had to use my





*For fast action assignments, where it only happens once, I typically use full-frame cameras. This image was captured with a Nikon Z 7II and a 70-200mm lens. The new autofocus algorithms are amazing in their ability to pick up and track moving subjects—especially in situations where the subject is moving erratically.*

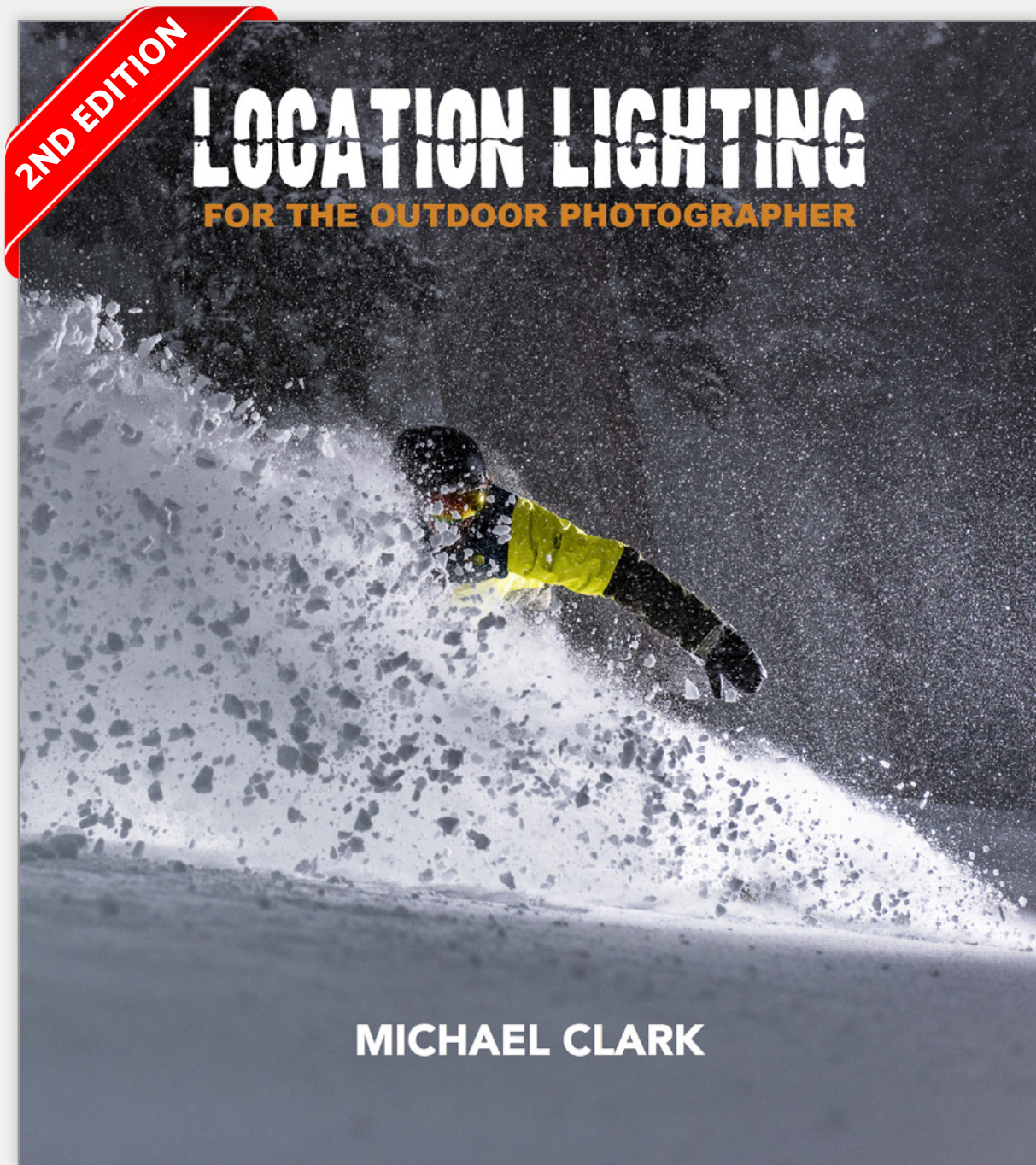
Nikon D850 for faster action oriented assignments. To be clear, the Nikon D850 was and still is a phenomenal camera. Even so, all of the advantages discussed here, and the speed with which mirrorless cameras can get you to the final image, makes the transition to mirrorless more than worth it for pro photographers.

We are at a point now where I am not sure how the top-end cameras can be made any better. My current setup is

unbelievable in terms of speed (the forthcoming Z 9) and image quality (GFX system). I am sure manufacturers will come out with ever higher megapixel cameras to tempt us in the future but for the moment, the technology is astounding. If you have been on the fence about making the move to mirrorless, now is the time. There is going to be a glut of gear on the used market so don't wait until all of your DSLR gear is worthless to sell it off. Kudos to all the manufacturers for taking it to the next level!

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*on assignment:*

# NEW MEXICO TRUE

AN ASTRONAUT ON PLANET WHITE SANDS





**A**s part of a recent assignment for New Mexico Tourism I worked with the [New Mexico Museum of Space History](#) to create a series of images of Mike Shinabery (an employee of the Space Museum) in an Astronaut suit in and around Alamogordo, New Mexico. The Space History Museum had a \$60,000 USD replica space suit based on Neil Armstrong's suit used for the Moon landing in 1969. This is the suit you see here in these images.

Of course, this suit looks perfectly new and is bright white since it isn't coated in lunar dust. Interestingly, this replica doesn't have all of the gaskets you would find in the original but it still weighs a lot. Mike brought along with him a co-worker, April James, who helped him get in and out of the suit, and who was also there to monitor his safety as the suit is such a good insulator that Mike could easily pass out from dehydration. April checked in with Mike every ten minutes or so to make sure he was still 100%. Of course, a full working space suit like this would have cooling built-in to avoid these issues.

Since White Sands National Park was nearby, and offered an otherworldly landscape, we spent a few hours creating images of our astronaut wondering around the dunes and taking it easy near the iconic rest area shelters. With Mike on the dunes, it felt like we were on another planet and the location seemed to fit very well with the idea for this assignment. With the lifestyle images of Mike sitting in a picnic shelter (and leaning against it) we definitely were tipping our cap to the "tongue in cheek" nature of our photo shoot.

We ended up creating images in White Sands around noon, which is not typically the first choice for

photography. But because the suit was white and the blazing sun filled in most shadows, this really helped lend itself to the high-key look I went after in the post-processing. It also just goes to show there isn't really any bad light. It is all how you use it. For this assignment I worked with my FUJIFILM GFX cameras exclusively so all of the images were captured using a glorious 102 MP sensor and a variety of the FUJIFILM GF lenses.

As a space nut myself, and as someone who desperately wanted to be an Astronaut (and even got a B.S. degree in Physics pursuing that dream), this assignment was pretty fun to say the least. Mike and April had quite a few amazing stories gleaned from working with NASA. They also talked about the time, way back in 1982, when the Space Shuttle landed at White Sands as well as some of the lesser known details about the nearby test of the first atomic bomb back in 1945.

We got quite a few amazing images on this assignment. The image that opens this article (Pages 22-23) is definitely among the top images I have created this year. These images will be used to promote tourism for New Mexico and for the city of Alamogordo, just a few miles up the road from White Sands National Park. White Sands is hands down one of my favorite places in New Mexico so it was a blast to change it up and do something different on the gypsum dunes.

My thanks to Mike Shinabery and April James from the New Mexico Museum of Space History for all of their hard work to help create these images. Also, a huge thanks to New Mexico Tourism and the City of Alamogordo for this assignment. Lastly, a huge thank you to [Bill Stengel](#) for bringing me in on this project.





















portfolio







# Blurry Aspens

*by Michael Clark*

**T**he blurred image of golden aspens on the following page was created while out on a hike with my girlfriend and our dog. This type of image is nothing new. Photographers have been capturing very similar images of trees like this for a long, long time. Having taught workshops for more than 15 years now, I have seen quite a few of these type images before. They always seemed a bit gimmicky to me, but that is probably because I have seen so many of them. But every once in a while, you see an image created with this technique that just works and looks incredibly beautiful.

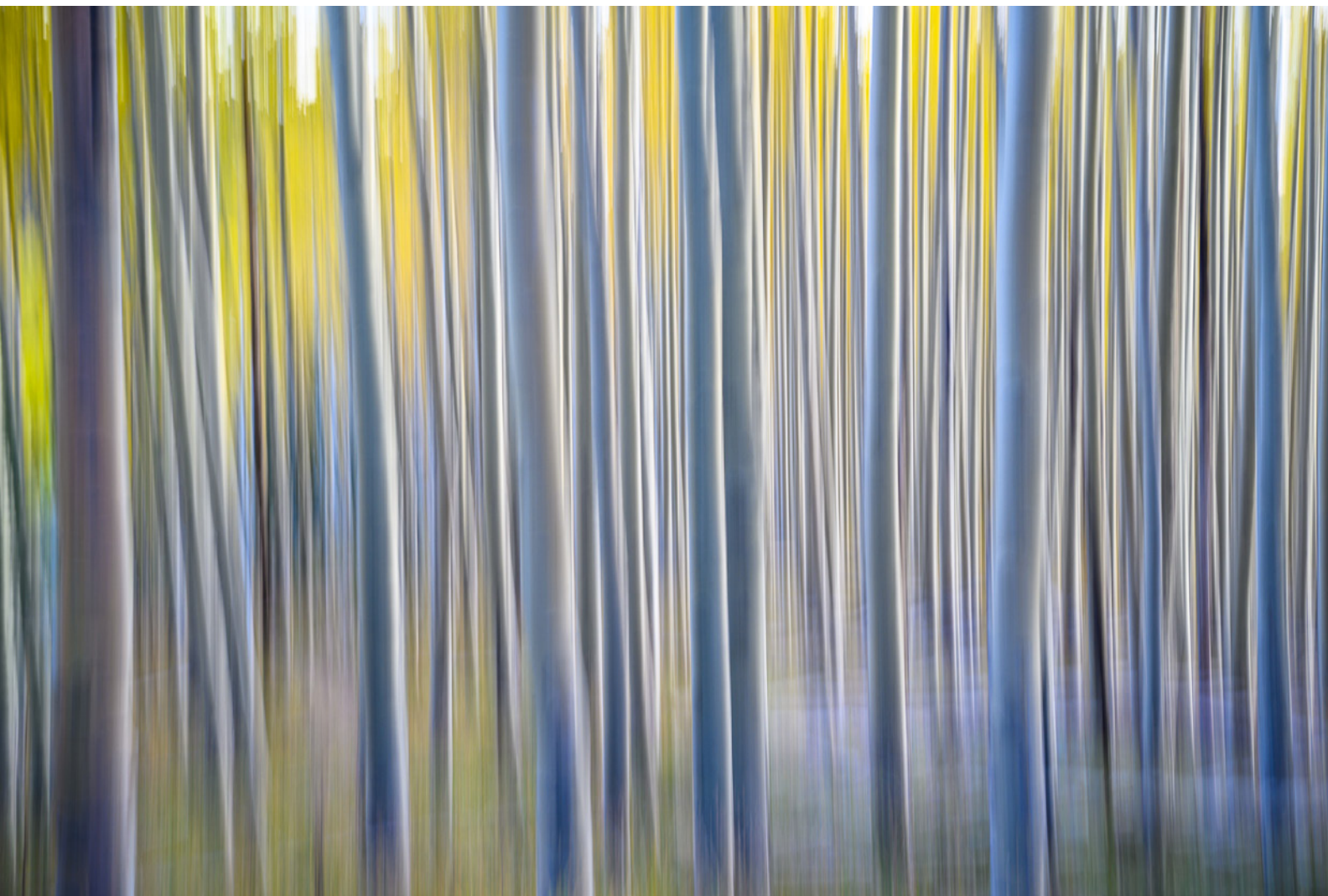
It is tricky to get an image like this that actually works. I made over six hundred images to get the image you see on the following page. Looking through all of the other 600 images you would think there would be one or two that are similarly interesting but there aren't any others that work as well as this one frame. This image works because I found the right patch of aspens that were for the most part parallel to the ground and separated just the right amount. It didn't hurt that these aspens were on the edge of a meadow making the first layer of trees about the same distance from the camera. The last bit that helped was the deep blues on the shaded side and the backlit golden leaves at last light. In this instance, my persistence paid off. I can easily see this image becoming a top seller for fine art prints and there have already been

a few inquiries and orders for prints of this image even though I only captured it six weeks ago.

Ever since my assignment with the [FUJIFILM GFX 100s](#) a year ago, where we created a variety of motion blur images of downhill skateboarders (as seen on page 17), it seems I have been on a motion blur kick. I have created a wide variety of motion blur action images of various sports—notably of [whitewater kayakers](#) this year. Hence, this year after several hikes in the forests above Santa Fe, New Mexico, I continued to take my camera on hikes to try and get some unique images among the aspens. There have been a few hikes where I neglected to take a camera with me and I was kicking myself on those hikes for not bringing it.

The weird thing is with this latest aspen image, I have noticed the amazing collection of images I have amassed over my career of trees in general. As an adventure photographer, I don't think that much about trees. Generally the fewer trees the better when it comes to creating adventure images because the open landscape places the athlete more clearly. Nevertheless, early on in my career, an image of [aspens in the snow](#) became one of my trademark images. I guess the point of this editorial is to always carry a camera, to get creative with everything presented to you, and pay attention to the trees.





*Golden Aspens along the Alamos Vista Trail above Santa Fe, New Mexico.*

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