

NEWSLETTER

MICHAEL CLARK

PHOTOGRAPHY



SPRING 2016



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Cover Image: An incredible light show over Cerro Torre and Cerro Fitz Roy just above the town of El Chalten, in southern Argentina. Opposite Page: The west face of Cerro Torre as seen through the tent door rising above the Patagonia Ice Cap near El Chalten, Argentina. Newsletter edited by Katherine Mast.





Motivation by Design

Shooting a wide variety of subjects with a new camera system

Since returning from Patagonia and Hawaii in early March, I have been shooting quite a bit with the new Hasselblad H5D medium format digital camera system I purchased in December last year. As you will see on the next page, and in the extensive review of that camera starting on Page 14 in this Newsletter, I have been shooting a wide variety of subjects with the new rig—including a lot of fast-paced sports images, which are not the type images normally created with medium format cameras.

I have also made quite a few prints of images shot with the H5D and I have been blown away by the image quality that shows up in the prints. From corner to corner they are tack-sharp, with buttery-smooth tonal transitions and impeccable color rendering. In the last 45 days I have been able to create an amazing array of images, many of which will find their way into my print portfolio and onto the website soon. To say I am “over the moon” for this new camera system would be an understatement.

In the latest issue of Digital Photo Pro, I read an excellent interview with David Burnett, a famous photojournalist who has been shooting for over five decades. David has shot a wide variety of sports action with medium format and large format film cameras in recent years. At one point in the interview he commented on using an old Speed Graphic 4x5 film camera to cover the Olympics

and said, “Even though it seemed like I was creating giant roadblocks, the impediments I created for myself by using older cameras forced me to start thinking and seeing in a very different way and challenging me.” While the H5D is not an older camera, and is by no means as challenging to use as a 4x5 camera, using a camera that forces me to slow down is helping me to see and think in a different way. This new system is proving to be great motivation to get out and shoot a lot of new personal projects that I have been wanting to do for quite some time.

Also, in this Newsletter is a re-cap of my Patagonia Ice Cap trip for Vertical Shot Expeditions earlier this year. That was a trip of a lifetime in terms of the adventures we had and the phenomenal weather. Check out the full story on that trip and quite a few images from it starting on Page 26.

Opposite Page: Daniel Coriz riding BMX at the Trash Pit, a local dirt jump bike park, in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Image shot with the Hasselblad H5D 50c WiFi and the Hasselblad HCD 24mm f/4.8 lens.

Recent Clients: Apple, Red Bull, Elinchrom, Mac Group US, X-Rite, National Geographic, Digital Photo Pro, Do-rado Magazine, Velo Press, Vertical Shot Expeditions and Adventure Gear Fest.



Communication Arts 2016 Photo Annual

Elinchrom Hi-Sync image to be included in the Communication Arts Photo Annual



I am honored to announce that the image above has been chosen for inclusion in the 2016 Communication Arts Photography Annual, which will be published in the July/August 2016 issue of Communication Arts (CA). The CA Photography Annual is one of the most exclusive photography competitions anywhere. The Communication Arts Photography Annual competition has been held

for the last 57 years making this one of the oldest photography competitions in the World. From the Communications Arts press release, "Of the 4,024 entries to the 57th Photography Annual, only 137 were accepted, representing the work of 127 photographers, making the Photography Annual the most exclusive major photography competition in the world."

Also, for those not familiar with Communication Arts, here is a description from the press release of the magazine, which is more like a high-end book than a magazine: "Communication Arts is a professional journal for designers, art directors, design firms, corporate design departments, agencies, illustrators, photographers and everyone involved in visual communications. Through its editorials, feature articles and the annual competitions it sponsors, CA provides new ideas and information, while promoting the highest professional standards for the field. With a paid circulation of 34,000, CA has a rich tradition of representing the aspirations of a continually-growing and quality-conscious field of visual communications. Now in its 58th year, CA continues to showcase the current best—whether it's from industry veterans or tomorrow's stars—in design, advertising, photography, illustration, interactive and typography. Everything is reproduced with printing technology and attention to detail unmatched by any trade publication anywhere."

For me personally, finding out that one of my images made it into the CA Photo Annual is a milestone in my career. Mentally, I was doing backflips here in my office for an hour or so after the notification came through. I have been submitting images to this photography competition for the past thirteen years and this is the first image that has made it into the Annual.

The image was shot for [Elinchrom](#) and was widely published to promote the new Hi-Sync capabilities of the Elinchrom ELB 400, the new Skyport Plus HS and the Quadra HS flash heads. This image was created during a demo of the new Hi-Sync system in front of 80 Elinchrom employees and distributors at a local indoor skate park in Lausanne, Switzerland. It isn't often I am doing a photo

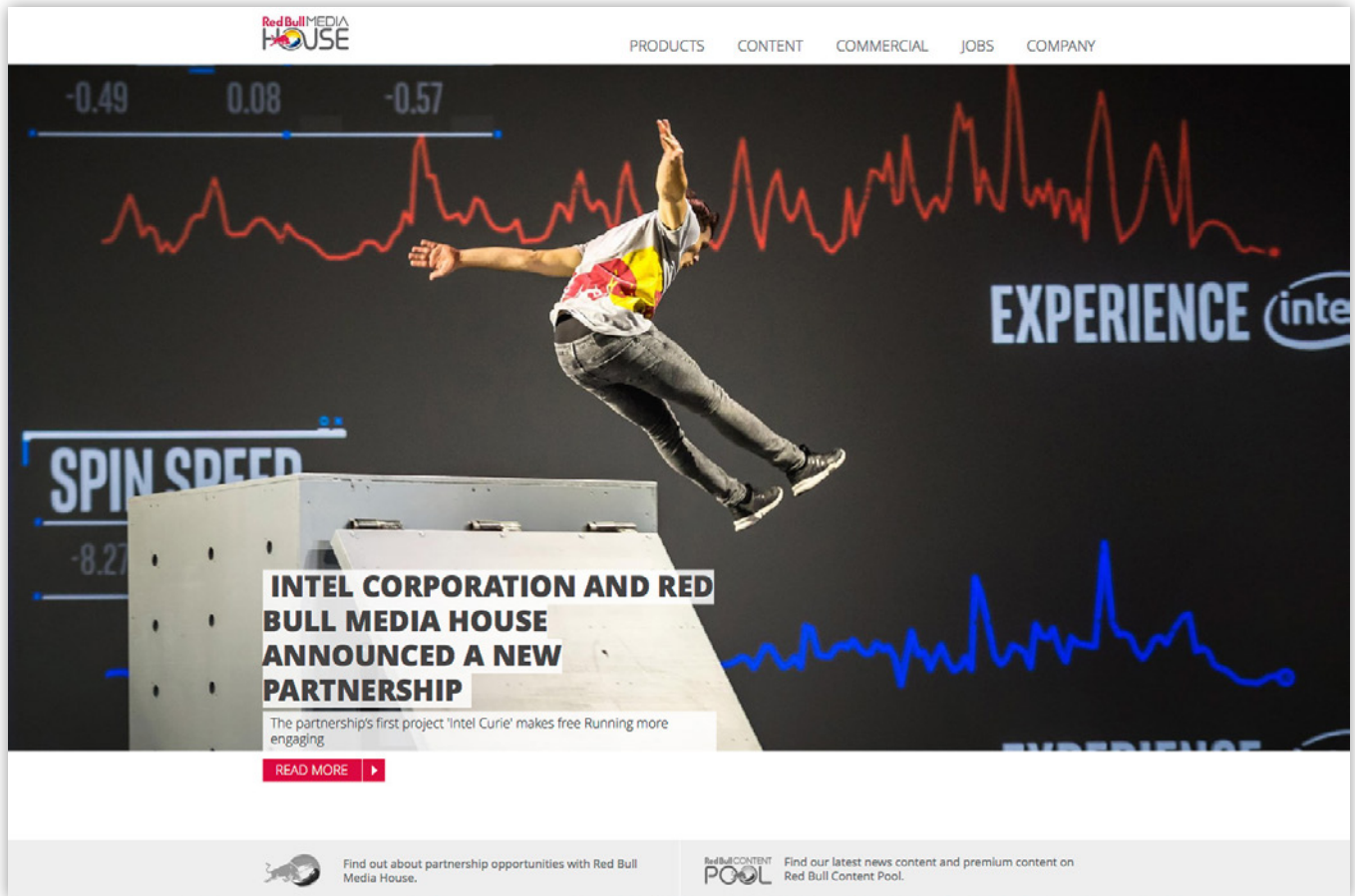
shoot in front of 80 people but this one went pretty well and the capability of the Elinchrom Hi-Sync technology is obvious.

The screenshot shows the Elinchrom website with a navigation bar at the top containing links like Components, Battery Packs, Power Packs, Continuous Light, EL Skyport, Light Shapers, and Studio. Below the navigation bar is a section titled "What is Hi-Sync?" with the text "Hi-Sync is the open door to a complete new world of flash photography. It's time to go past the barrier of flash photography!". A large image of a skateboarder in mid-air is featured, with the text "Hi-Sync 1/8000th sec. 1/2.5 ISO 800" below it. To the right of the skateboarder image is a list of bullet points: "Hi-Sync is the exclusive Elinchrom technology to go beyond the X-Sync of your Nikon or Canon DSLR camera", "It's easier than ever to setup and trigger your DSLR camera up to 1/8000th shutter speed", and "This allows you to do the following: Freeze motion, Overexpose the Sun, Darken background, Use wider aperture". Below the skateboarder image is a small image of the Elinchrom ELB 400 flash head.

My thanks to Elinchrom, especially to Bram Dauw and Thiago Costa who helped put this shoot together, and also to Chris Whittle, the President of Elinchrom. Also, my sincere thanks to [Communication Arts](#) and the six jurors who chose the winning images: Patrick Barber – Timber Press, Lionel Ferreira – Ferreira Design Company, Karen Frank – ESPN The Magazine, Mark Haumersen – Periscope, Claire Rosen – photographer, and Patrick Coyne – the editor/designer of Communication Arts. And finally, thanks to Maxime Genoud, the skater in this image, who worked very hard to help us create this final image for Elinchrom.

Red Bull/Intel Partnership Assignment

Photographing Red Bull Freerunning athlete Jason Paul at the CES Trade Show



Earlier this year, I had the opportunity to shoot for Red Bull at the CES trade show where they announced a partnership with Intel. Intel has created a tiny sensor, named Curie, which can measure an athlete's performance quantitatively. To demonstrate this new technology Red Bull brought in top freerunning athlete Jason Paul, as pictured above. Jason performed on stage in front of a huge audience.

From the Red Bull Media House website: "Attendees in person and around the world saw Curie's precise

calculations of Paul's hang time, rotation, body angle, landing force, spin and much more. Paul and his fellow free running athletes can one day use this data to better understand their spins, jumps, vaults and flips in order to naturally conquer obstacles and do tricks never before thought possible."

My thanks to Red Bull for bringing me out to photograph this new partnership. For more information on the new Curie chip and to see the video that accompanied the launch check out the Red Bull Media House [news blast](#).

Adventure Journal Interview

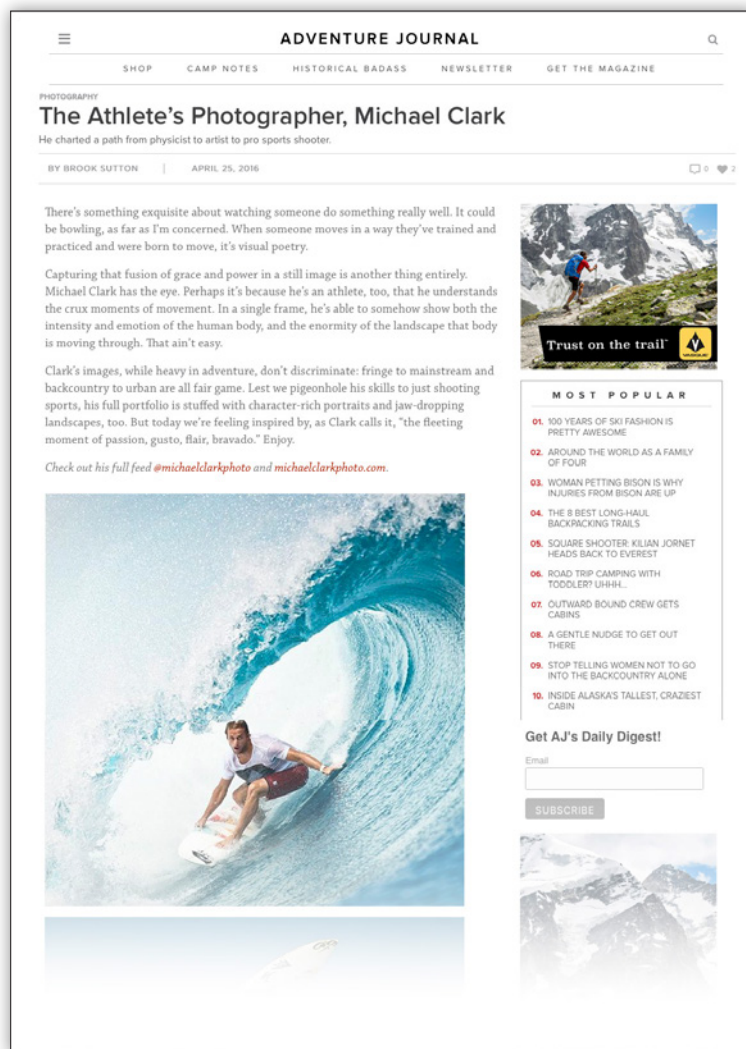
An interview entitled “The Athlete’s Photographer, Michael Clark”

The Adventure Journal did an interview with me for their venerable website, <http://adventure-journal.com>. It featured some interesting questions, which were quite different than the normal ones I usually get asked in interviews. It also had one of the best introductions I have ever read for one of my interviews. The author, Brook Sutton, prefaced the article with the following:

“There’s something exquisite about watching someone do something really well. It could be bowling, as far as I’m concerned. When someone moves in a way they’ve trained and practiced and were born to move, it’s visual poetry.

Capturing that fusion of grace and power in a still image is another thing entirely. Michael Clark has the eye. Perhaps it’s because he’s an athlete, too, that he understands the crux moments of movement. In a single frame, he’s able to somehow show both the intensity and emotion of the human body, and the enormity of the landscape that body is moving through. That ain’t easy.

Clark’s images, while heavy in adventure, don’t discriminate: fringe to mainstream and backcountry to urban are all fair game. Lest we pigeonhole his skills to just shooting sports, his full portfolio is stuffed with character-rich portraits and jaw-dropping landscapes, too. But today we’re feeling inspired by, as Clark calls it, “the fleeting moment of passion, gusto, flair, bravado.” Enjoy.”



The images were collected from my Instagram account for the article. My thanks to the Adventure Journal and Brook Sutton for the great interview! This interview discusses topics such as the “fleeting moment,” which sport is the hardest adventure sport to capture, working with athletes who are artists themselves and an ideal afternoon without any pending responsibilities. Check out the full interview on the [Adventure Journal website](http://adventure-journal.com).

workshops

Photography Workshops

An overview of workshops and photo treks with Michael Clark

Each year I teach a handful of workshops on a variety of topics including adventure sports photography, big-wave surfing photography, and artificial lighting. Below is a listing of the workshops I will be teaching in 2016. For the full description of these workshops and to find out how to register, go to the [Workshops](#) page on my website or blog.

Photography Sailing Expedition in Arctic Norway

Lofoten islands, Norway - August 20 - 27, 2016

Now in its third edition, our sailing and photography expedition to the Norwegian Arctic islands of Lofoten is a rare chance to photograph pristine coastal locations which are inaccessible to others. To us, sailing rather than driving is the most logical way to fully experience and explore these stunning islands.

This small-group expedition (with a maximum of six participants) will use a very comfortable 47ft (14m) yacht built in 2012. The group will be guided by the renowned outdoor photographers Michael Clark and Vlad Donkov. The adventure starts in Svolvær, the capital of the Lofoten Islands, and follows the coastline of the awe-inspiring mountainous islands, wild fjords and passages.

This sailing adventure is suitable for people without any

previous sailing experience. However, participants should be adventurous by nature and ready to endure long days. This expedition is about chasing great light and experiencing places that most people never get to see!

Sailing presents us with plenty of opportunities to take photographs from unusual viewpoints and to reach locations only accessible by sea. In addition to the yacht, we will use an inflatable boat with an outboard engine. This will enable us to land at wild beaches and explore our surroundings on foot. There will be good chances of observing various whales and orca, as well as dolphins and seals. White-tailed eagles hunting for puffins and fish will also frequently keep us company.

For a detailed itinerary and much more information on this exciting workshop visit the [Vertical Shot Expedition website](#).

Workshop fee: \$4,500 [Please Note that this expedition is being run by Vertical Shot Expeditions, which is a European company so payments will be sent to Europe.]

Mentor Series Photo Trek: South Dakota

August 10-14, 2016

A sacred land of abounding beauty, the Badlands and



A landscape image from the Lofoten Islands in northern Norway. This image, provided by Vertical Shot Expeditions, gives an idea of the stunning landscapes we will encounter on the Sailing expedition this August. For more information on this workshop read the detailed description below.

Black Hills of South Dakota are distinguished by a landscape of sharply eroded buttes, pinnacles and spires that define the region. Join the Mentor Series and Nikon professional photographers Michael Clark & Reed Hoffmann in South Dakota to hone your photo skills at Badlands National Park, Mount Rushmore and Custer State Park.

At Badlands National Park, capture the vast prairies and grasslands amidst the extraordinary badland formations that were carved by wind and water over time. Mount Rushmore and the Needles of the Black Hills provide a vivid contrast to the badlands with their impressive granite pillars and towers.

At Black Hills Wild Horse Sanctuary, where more than 600 wild mustangs run free, we will photograph the wild horses close-up against the backdrop of the Black Hills and the Cheyenne River. Custer State Park will provide additional opportunities for improving your photo and lighting skills, including the stunning reflections across the beautiful Sylvan Lake.

For more information on this workshop visit the [Mentor Series website](#). Workshop Fee: \$1,525 [Includes transportation to each shooting location, park permit and entrance fees, in-field instruction, presentations, and digital review sessions.]

Workshop Testimonials

"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 4 years of college and several careers getting less candid advice and encouragement than I got in 4 days with you. For what it is worth, thank you for that." - Brandon McMahon, Adventure Photography 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, Summer 2010

"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, Summer 2010

"I just finished Michael Clark's Adventure Photography Workshop at the Santa Fe Workshops in April 2013. I had a terrific time with the group of people - one from China, another from Seattle, another from Wyoming, me from Michigan - you get the picture that we came from everywhere. We came because of the Santa Fe Workshop's reputation of presenting an intense learning experience guided by fantastic instructors. We got both. Michael Clark really knows his stuff and has a lot of excess energy,

which he focused on us, and he can also teach. He read our skills and weaknesses quickly and went to work to improve each of us technically. He sorted out our individual goals, even when we couldn't really articulate them. Then he gave us plenty of time to address those goals and ask question after question after question. The rough environments in which we photographed were great fun to explore. Couldn't be better." - Tania Evans

"Thanks again for such a terrific workshop. I have taken one other two-day Lightroom workshop, but your's is the best!" - Vance Thompson, Lightroom Workshop, 2011

"I really enjoyed the surfing [photography] workshop! It was great on every level. I really can't thank you enough and I hope to take another of your workshops in the near future." - Ben Reed, 2013 Surfing Photo Workshop

"Your workshop at Santa Fe was too good. The level of expertise that shared was top-notch and I hope to repeat this experience again. Thanks for such a great workshop!" - Participant in the 2008 Balloon Fiesta workshop taught by Andy Biggs and myself.

"My mind is still spinning and I can't help but smile every time I think of the wonderful experience garnered from our workshop. Between what I learned from the two of you, as well as from my talented classmates - this was a great experience, and I would do it again." - Participant in the 2008 Balloon Fiesta workshop taught by Andy Biggs and myself.

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

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The Hasselblad H5D 50c WiFi

A top-end 50 MP digital medium format camera system



Author's Note: *This review is an abridged version of the full Hasselblad H5D 50c WiFi review that originally appeared on my blog. Note that I have added new content here in this review as I have had more time to shoot with the camera. Read the original review [on my blog](#).*

Last December, after extensive testing of various medium format digital cameras, I decided to purchase the [Hasselblad H5D 50c WiFi](#) camera and four lenses. As you might suspect, this wasn't a snap decision. It was over a year in the making. I started thinking about

medium format cameras early in 2015 when I worked with [Andrew Eccles](#), a top-end, world-famous portrait photographer and a good friend. In my ever expanding effort to push the limits of photography, I am always looking for new tools to give me an edge. Whether it is new technology from Elinchrom, like their Hi-Sync technology, or Hasselblad's higher resolution and a different look, whatever can give me an edge on the competition is what I am after. While testing out the Hasselblad, I was inspired by the images I was seeing and a whole new way of working.



As shown above and on the previous page, the H5D 50c WiFi is a gorgeous camera. When you pick it up the sense of quality is overwhelming. It is as if this camera was carved from a single chunk of Aluminum and Stainless Steel. The camera fits into your hand like a glove and has excellent ergonomics. The LCD screen on the back of the H5D is a bit lacking but that has been upgraded to a Retina-like high resolution LCD with the brand-new H6D.

Of course, the gear doesn't make a photograph. These are just tools. I haven't given up my Nikons. I am still shooting 70% of everything I create with my Nikon D4 and D810. The Nikon D810 is currently my favorite all around camera for almost any subject--even sports. When it comes to capturing action, I need wicked-fast autofocus and for that scenario the Nikons are the best option in my tool bag. The autofocus on the Hasselblad, or any other medium format camera for that matter, is pathetic by comparison. Just as with anything else, you use the right tool for the job.

Initially, when I started looking at medium format digital cameras, I wasn't considering the Hasselblad. I was looking at the Phase One offerings since they had just come out with the Phase One XF, which is a modern, updated version of the Mamiya 645 cameras, which the older Phase One's were modeled after. With touch screens and a squared-off look, the XF seemed like the best camera out there in this format. I had used the older Phase One DF [years ago](#) and was not impressed at all by that camera. The autofocus was pretty much unusable on the DF. When I test out the Phase One XF, I was underwhelmed by the touch screens, and the autofocus seemed even

worse than it was on the DF. By comparison, the Hasselblad H5D seemed more old-school in terms of the push button layout, but ultimately it was and is a much more usable camera. I'll get into the details on that statement here later in the review.

Here in this review, I will first discuss why I decided to purchase a medium format digital camera. I realize that will be the biggest question most folks reading this review will have right off the bat. Then I will offer my thoughts on the H5D 50c WiFi. Last, I will share the reasons I chose the H5D over everything else out there. As already noted, no one buys a camera in this price range without testing out the competition. I also wrote a blog post comparing the Hasselblad H5D 50c WiFi with the Phase One XF and the IQ350 back, which can be found on my [blog](#).

As a side note here, since I wrote the original review of the H5D 50c WiFi, Hasselblad has announced the H6D with many huge improvements and options with the same 50 MP sensor (as found in the H5D 50c WiFi) as well as a new 100 MP option. The H6D is as good as it gets in medium format imaging right now. I hope to get

my hands on the H6D here in the next few months to test it out.

Why go with a medium format digital camera?

When I published the Winter 2016 issue of my Newsletter, I mentioned in the opening editorial that I had purchased a Hasselblad H5D. Within hours of sending out that Newsletter, I received a few calls asking why I purchased such an expensive camera and also what it does that my Nikons can't? I can understand the reaction. I had the same reaction to medium format cameras years ago when I shot with that Phase One DF mentioned above. Over the last year, and while testing out medium format cameras there were several factors that made me seriously consider such a camera system.

First, whether you are shooting on medium format film or digital the larger sensor size gives a different look to the images. In part, this is because there is significantly less depth of field with this format than with 35mm DSLR sensors. The larger sensor of a medium format camera creates a more isolating look when shooting portraits or anytime you are using a large aperture. This is not to be understated. Medium format has a certain look that is quite different. I realize that only a small percentage of clients and everyone else will be able to see that difference, but for those that can or even if they can't, it will make people look at the image just that much longer. I am already working with those clients who are discerning and are looking for the best image quality possible so this new acquisition just adds another tool I can use to keep those clients and find others like them.

Another factor is image quality. My Nikon D810, with its

36 MP sensor, already has phenomenal resolution and overall image quality. It uses a 14-bit sensor, which is amazing, but can't match the 16-bit images produced by both the Hasselblad and Phase One cameras. To understand the difference between 16-bit versus 14-bit sensors requires a bit of math. A 14-bit sensor can record up to 16,384 colors per channel, which means a total of 4.39×10^{12} possible colors. A 16-bit sensor can record up to 65,536 colors per channel, which comes out to 2.81×10^{14} possible colors. All that math means a 16-bit sensor can capture 64 times as many colors as a 14-bit sensor. That is a huge difference. In terms of the final image, a 16-bit sensor shows many more subtle tones than an image captured with a 14-bit sensor. And this is especially noticeable with portraiture, which is why pretty much all of the top portrait photographers work with medium format digital cameras.

The new CMOS sensor in the H5D 50c WiFi (and also in the Phase One IQ350 and Pentax 645Z) offers unparalleled low noise at high ISOs. In my testing the Hasselblad H5D 50c has the best low noise of any medium format camera. In fact, ISO 6400 on the H5D 50c had similar amounts of noise as my Nikon D810 at ISO 800, which is just amazing. That makes the H5D 50c incredibly versatile when shooting handheld without a tripod in less than ideal light. I don't hesitate to crank up the ISO on the Hasselblad. I found that the H5D 50c WiFi had significantly less noise than the Phase One IQ350. Strangely, they use the same sensor but with the IQ350 I wouldn't shoot with it at anything above ISO 1600 whereas with the Hasselblad I find that ISO 6400 is phenomenal.

Aside from the look of the image files and the extra color information, working with a medium format camera also



Above is a landscape image shot with the H5D 50c WiFi from Monument Valley on the Arizona/Utah border. The dynamic range offered by this camera and the edge-to-edge sharpness are two of the major factors that drew me to medium format digital in the first place.

slows you down quite a bit. It forces you to be more intentional and thoughtful, and because of this it often results in higher quality images. Many medium format shooters work tethered to a computer all the time. As an adventure photographer this isn't always possible for me but when I can shoot tethered with the Hasselblad I will. Even if I can't shoot tethered the WiFi capabilities of the H5D 50c WiFi mean that I can use an iPad or my iPhone to check exposure and focus in the field.

On the technical side, the Hasselblad also allows me to

sync strobes at shutter speeds up to 1/800th second, which allows me to darken the background considerably when shooting outdoors. It also means I can use less light output (less Watt/Seconds) to get the same effect as I would with my 35mm DSLRs. Note that with the Hasselblad when syncing the flash at 1/800th second I am not using High Speed Sync, Hypersync or Hi-Sync techniques. I am using the entire burst of flash, which makes this a more powerful option in many ways than using Hi-Sync or High Speed Sync. The new H6D syncs with strobes up to 1/2,000th second.



Above, Sandy Hill climbs the outside structure of Elixir Studios in Albuquerque, New Mexico. This image was a two shot panorama put together in Photoshop and then retouched as a composite. The final Photoshop PSD image file is a whopping 800 MB and nearly 12,000 pixels across. The image is wicked sharp and the skin tones are dead on. Working with the HSD image files, they can take a lot of massaging in Photoshop—more than my DSLR images can take and still hold together.

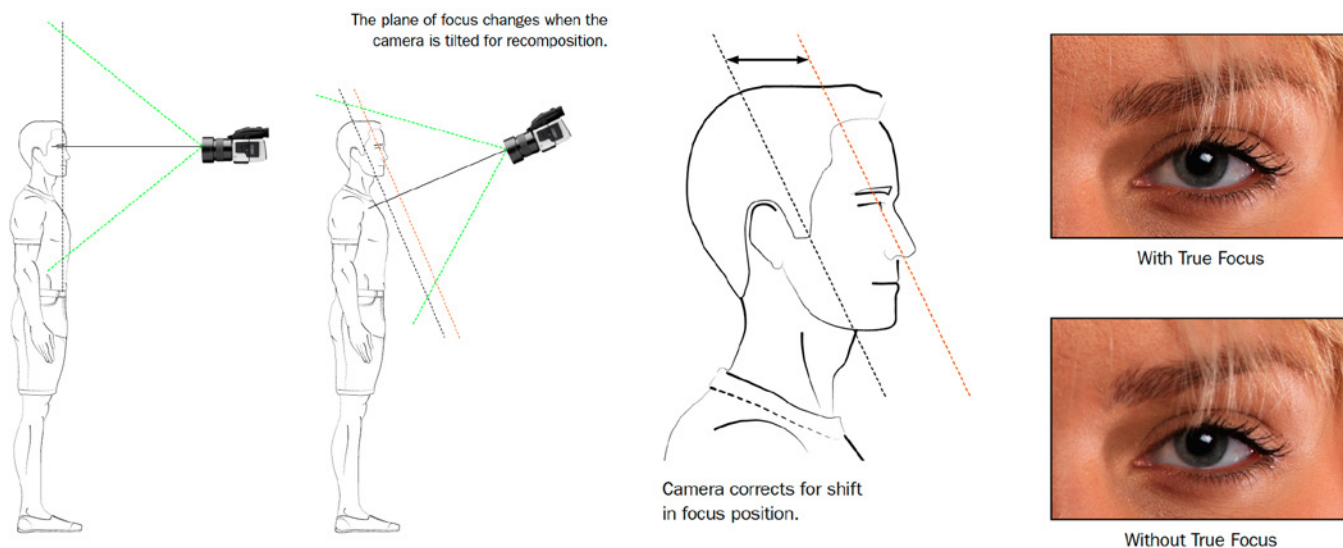
Lastly, there are the lenses. When you see a digital medium format image shot with an extremely wide depth of field, you'll notice that the image is tack sharp from corner to corner. With the Hasselblad lenses, the corners are very nearly as sharp as the center of the image. This is a massive difference from 35mm lenses, which are amazingly good these days but still no match for a top-end Hasselblad or Schneider medium format lens. Even the best of the best 35mm lenses, like the Zeiss Otus lenses, are no match for medium format glass.

Summing up, combining the shallow depth of field, the incredible image quality, the low noise at high ISOs with the new CMOS sensor (at 50 MP), the amazing lens options, the flash sync options and how it forces you to work in a different manner all adds up to a whole different ball game. These are the main reasons I purchased the

Hasselblad because it allows me to take my work to the next level in terms of image quality and it also opens up doors to images I couldn't produce with any other system.

Thoughts on the Hasselblad H5D 50c WiFi

Without a doubt the H5D is a beautifully crafted camera. When you pick it up everything about it oozes high-quality craftsmanship. This thing is pretty much a sculpted chunk of metal. Even the lenses are encased in a metal barrel and have modern looking rubber focusing collars. It is a solid feeling camera, and a hefty one at that, but such is the case with medium format cameras in general. About the only thing that looks a bit old school is the LCD on the digital back. The rubberized camera grip, which also doubles as the battery, is perfectly sculpted and feels



The True Focus technology built into the H5D body helps us overcome the focus issues associated with the focus and recompose technique. The True Focus system works by using a yaw rate sensor and an Absolute Position Lock (APL) processor in the camera, which is able to correct for the vertical and horizontal focus shift as a result of recomposing a camera. Basically, the True Focus system recalculates the focus as you move the camera up or down or side to side to accurately

comfortable in the hand. I found the H5D to be the most ergonomic and comfortable medium format camera that I tested.

I realize that the H5D is a bit long in the tooth since it was introduced about four years ago. This has allowed Hasselblad to figure out a lot of the issues with the camera so that it is now robust and reliable. The H series Hasselblad cameras have been around for a long time, and they have been greatly refined with every iteration. Having shot a with a few of the prior generations, including the H3D, the H5D feels more solidly built and better thought out than any previous model that I have used.

The autofocus on the H5D is also far better and more accurate than any other medium format system I have tried. That doesn't mean it is crazy fast but it is faster and more accurate than the competition. There is only one focus point in the center of the frame--as is the case with every medium format digital camera. Hence, if you want the

subject off center you have to focus and recompose. The problem with the focus and recompose technique, especially when using large apertures with medium format cameras, is that the focus distance to your original point of focus actually changes slightly when you recompose, which results in missing the focus where you want it to be. As in the diagram shown above if you focus on the eye then recompose, the subjects ears will be in focus but the eyes won't because the actual distance has changed. The True Focus technology built into the H5D body helps us overcome the focus issues associated with the focus and recompose technique. The True Focus system works by using a yaw rate sensor and an Absolute Position Lock (APL) processor in the camera, which is able to correct for the vertical and horizontal focus shift as a result of recomposing the camera. Basically, the True Focus system recalculates the focus as you move the camera up or down or side to side to accurately adjust the point of focus selected before recomposing. In practice, it works extremely well, even when shooting wide open with a

lens like the HC 100mm f/2.2. On the next page is an example of an image shot wide open at f/2.2 with the HC 100mm lens.

With medium format cameras, a fast frame rate is anything more than one frame per second. The H5D 50c WiFi is no speed demon in this department. It can only shoot at 1.5 fps. That is faster than quite a number of other medium format rigs but not fast enough for motor driving along while shooting sports. Hence, how sensitive and responsive the shutter release is becomes that much more important. I found that the shutter release on the H5D had very little time lag and I could trigger the camera at just the right instant. As an adventure sports photographer that is a key feature for those times when I get one shot as the athlete passes through the frame.

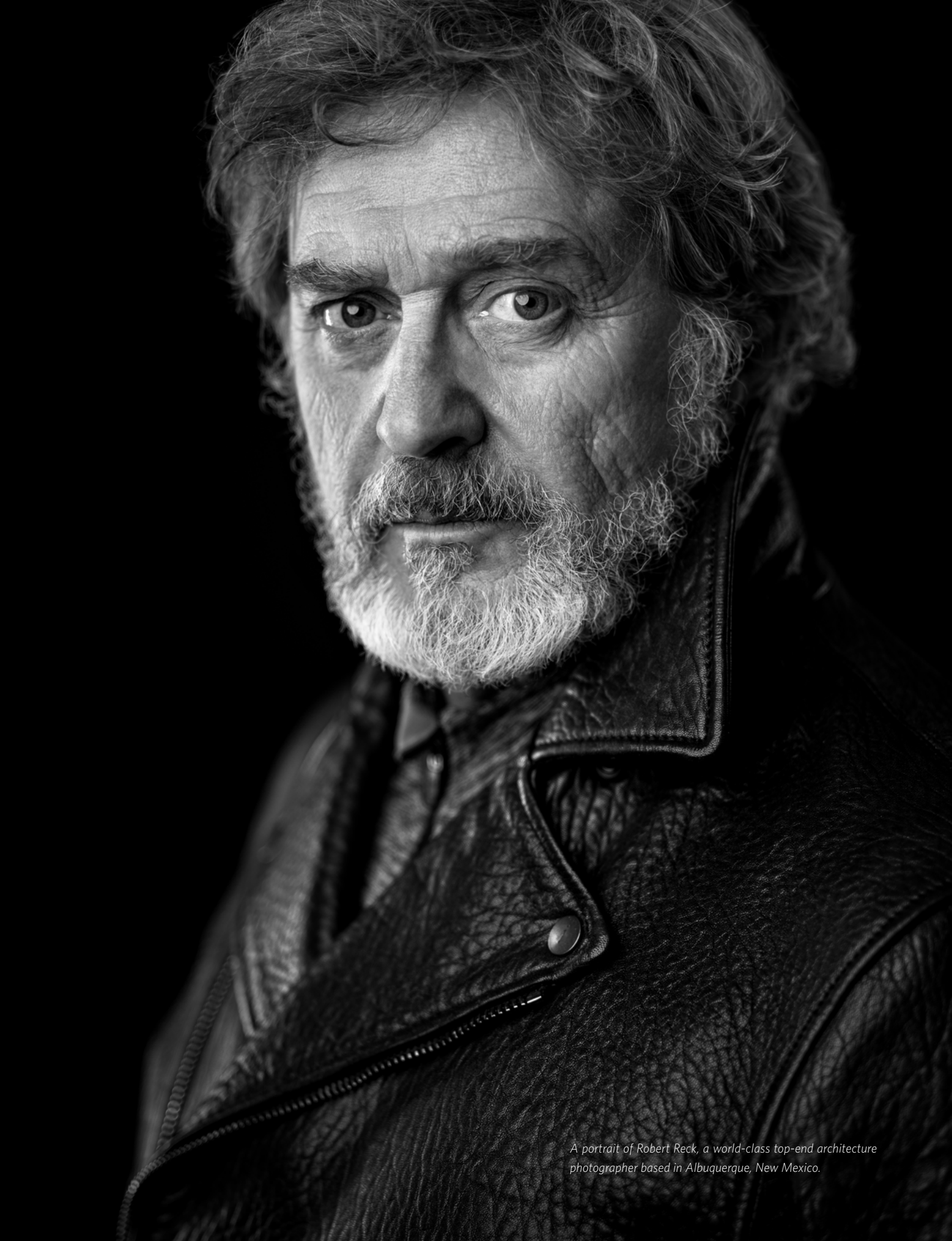
Hasselblad also happens to have the widest array of lenses of any the medium format camera system. With lenses ranging from 24mm to 300mm, Hasselblad has a lot of lenses to choose from and because the H series lenses have been around for ten years or more, there are a lot of these available in the used market. Often the used lenses are half the price of the new lenses, which makes adding lenses to your kit quite affordable compared to other medium format options. When I bought the H5D 50c WiFi body, I also purchased the HCD 24mm f/4.8, the HC 100mm f/2.2 and the HC 150mm f/3.2 lenses and recently added the HC 50-110mm f/3.5-4.5. I thought I would start out with these four lenses and then build the system from there.

While there is a lot to love about the H5D there are several antiquated features that could definitely see an upgrade (and have with the newly announced H6D). The

LCD on the back of the H5D, is ancient compared to just about any LCD you've seen on any other camera. It is usable for most functions but only barely so. The menu access on the digital back is rudimentary but functional. The LCD on the top of the grip, works just fine but the text and icons are a bit pixelated.

In use, the LCD on the 50c WiFi digital back is usable in Live View and you can just barely tell when the image is in focus using Live View to manually focus the lens. The LCD displays the images with a lot of contrast so the LCD is not the place to judge the tones in the image. There is also a feature where you can push a button and it zooms into 100% on the point where you focused originally (if True Focus was used). This allows you to see if the image is in focus. Using this feature I can't tell 100% if the image is in focus or not but for situations where I really need to know I will use the WiFi connection and check the focus on my iPhone or iPad. Of course, if you can shoot tethered to a computer, then that is the best option for making sure the image is dialed in. The LCD can also display the Histogram. I have found the autoexposure to be erratic at best. But with this level of camera I am taking my time and dialing in the exposure using both the Histogram and a handheld light meter.

While the longest shutter speed is a respectable 34 minutes, the shortest shutter speed is only 1/800th second (on the new H6D the fastest shutter speed is now 1/2,000th second). So far, I have not found the 1/800th second shutter speed to be severely limiting. For fast moving sports, this is the absolute minimum shutter speed I would use to stop action. For fast moving sports where the athlete is coming by the camera position at super fast speeds, 1/800th second may not be fast



A portrait of Robert Reck, a world-class top-end architecture photographer based in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

enough to stop the motion of the athlete but for those sports I would probably work with a DSLR anyway because of the need for superfast autofocus.

Syncing strobes at shutter speeds up to 1/800th second is more complicated than you may have realized. Most wireless transmitters, like the PocketWizard, can only go up to 1/250th second without some serious tweaking. Luckily, Elinchrom, Profoto and Broncolor all have their own transmitters that can sync with the Hasselblad H5D at up to 1/800th second. The new Elinchrom Skyport Plus HS, when set to SPEED mode, can sync with Elinchrom strobes up to 1/800th second without any issues. For this to work well you need to use strobes that have a shorter flash duration than 1/800th second, like the Elinchrom Ranger RX Speed AS power pack and the Action heads or the ELB 400 and the Action heads.

I want to mention the WiFi capabilities of the H5D 50c here as well. Setting up the WiFi connection is incredibly easy. To turn on this feature simply enable it on the digital back and then go into your iPhone's wireless settings and choose the Hasselblad WiFi. Once it is set up the Hasselblad Phocus Mobile App will show all of the images that are on the card in the camera and you can browse them simply by swiping as you would any other photos normally. You can zoom in to check sharpness and even rank the images in the App. In my limited testing so far, it works well and it is a feature I will use often, even when shooting alone. As of right now, there is an issue with the Phocus App and iPhones, but I am told this is being fixed. The WiFi works perfectly with an iPad.

I could go on and on discussing all of the various features of the H5D, but in the end all that matters is what I

can produce with it. In the past 45 days, I have already created a wide range of stellar images with the H5D 50c WiFi. While a few of those images are shown here the best images have been held back for an article that will appear in an upcoming issue of Digital Photo Pro. I love working with this camera and every time I pull it out of the bag I am inspired to create something special.

Reasons for going with Hasselblad H5D 50c WiFi

In summing up, I will cover the main reasons I decided on the H5D 50c WiFi over everything else out there at the moment. When I purchased the camera back in December 2015 the Phase One XF IQ100 was not announced yet, neither was the H6D. There were a combination of factors that helped me make a decision, which are covered below.

- It can actually focus accurately. This is perhaps the #1 biggest reason I love the Hasselblad. Purchasing a \$30,000 digital camera that can't autofocus is like buying a Ferrari that doesn't have a steering wheel.
- The H5D has faster and more accurate focusing (in my experience) than Phase One XF.
- In my testing, the H5D 50c has slightly better image quality than the Phase One IQ350 at high ISOs.
- It is more reliable and won't need to be sent back to Hasselblad for repairs two to three times a year. I spoke with a number of Phase One owners who said that they have already had to ship their XF back to Phase One to be repaired. None of the Hasselblad owners said they had ever had to ship the camera back for repairs.
- The shutter release is responsive so you can catch the decisive moment. By comparison, when I tested the Phase One XF its shutter release felt mushy and there



I intend to shoot not only landscapes and portraits with the H5D 50c WiFi but also adventure sports as well. Above, Daniel Coriz catches some air at the Trash Pit, a local dirt jump bike park, in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The H5D forces you to slow down in a way that works just as well for the action as it does for portraits and less active subjects. Here, the 1/800th second flash sync also allows me to overpower daylight in the middle of the day with much smaller battery-powered strobes.

was a noticeable delay. I am not sure if that was an issue with how it was setup but it was a serious issue.

- Hasselblad has a slightly wider selection of lenses.
- There are tons of used Hasselblad H series lenses on the market and many are available for one-third or half the cost of the new lenses. This allows me to build up my kit without going broke, especially since Hasselblad HC lenses (aside from the 80mm) range from \$4,500 up to \$9,000 apiece.
- I prefer the Hasselblad lenses over the Schneider lenses because they are smaller and have a nicer finish.

- One Lens in particular, the Hasselblad HC 100mm f/2.2, caught my eye and had me drooling. On the H5D 50c WiFi this lens is the equivalent of an 80mm f/1.0 or so in 35mm DSLR terms. It is ridiculously sharp and a perfect portrait lens. It is also one of the fastest medium format lenses available, which makes it unique. This lens, as well as the sweet HCD 24mm f/4.8 landscape lens that I initially bought with the camera body were two that helped seal the deal.
- The Hasselblad 3FR raw images have full support in Lightroom, which means I can continue to use it as home

base for my digital workflow. Also, since Lightroom is a key part of the look and feel of my images this is a huge deal and means my digital workflow won't have to change.

- The image quality at high ISOs is mind-blowing. Better than anything else I have seen anywhere.
- The H5D works flawlessly with my flashes and with the Elinchrom Skyport Plus HS transmitter.
- The WiFi feature built-in to the H5D 50c WiFi is a great asset for jobs where the art director wants to see what is coming in. I can hand them an iPad on location in the middle of nowhere and they can see everything I am shooting wirelessly. This feature is also great for when I want to check sharpness and see more detail in an image on my iPhone or iPad. I wish my Nikons had this feature.
- The camera has great ergonomics and the grip is much nicer than any other medium format camera I have worked with.
- The camera is more usable without taking your eye away from the viewfinder than any other medium format digital camera I have used. I don't accidentally change settings while shooting with the camera.
- There are several places that rent Hasselblad H series lenses so getting an exotic lens to shoot with for a specific assignment isn't that difficult.
- The full H5D 50c WiFi camera, back and a kit including four lenses ended up costing around \$30,000 USD because the H5D was on sale for only \$14.5K in December 2015 (and still is actually right now). For a similar kit from Phase One, it would have cost around \$70,000 USD.

In the end, it was an easy decision to figure out which camera worked best for me and which made the most sense to purchase. The bigger issue was whether or not I should purchase a medium format digital camera or just

stick with my Nikons. Only time will tell on that question, but already I have produced some stellar images with the H5D. With such a huge investment you can be sure that I am going to put this Hasselblad to work and get seriously creative with it to make sure it pays off. Speaking of paying it off, getting access to a variety of medium format cameras to test them out is a huge process on its own. See the [original review](#) of this camera on my blog for more on that process.

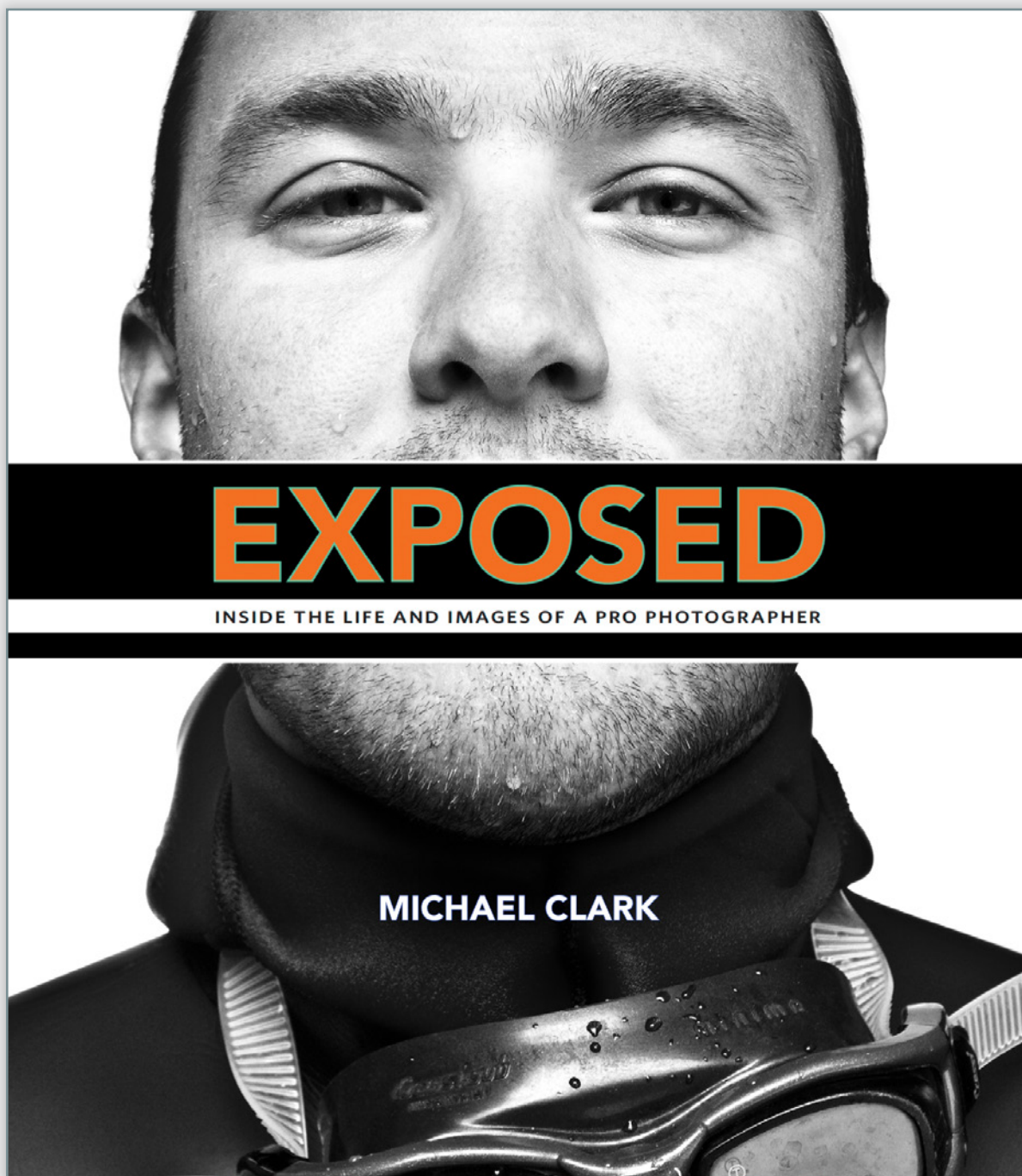
In the last few months, when I have actually had time to shoot with the H5D, both on assignments and on personal projects, I have been inspired by this camera in a way that hasn't happened in a long time. This camera makes you think about what you are doing. That in turn forces me to plan out the shot with more care, resulting in better images. This camera has forced me to work harder and the result has been some impressive work.

I have also made quite a few large prints from images shot with the H5D and they are stunning. Corner to corner, they are ridiculously sharp, as you would expect. Also, one of the things I have noticed is that the color accuracy is phenomenal and tonal transitions are buttery smooth. As a result, the prints I have made from the H5D show that it is in a whole other league when compared to my DSLRs. The look and feel of the images coming out of the Hasselblad is exactly what I had hoped they would be when I bought it—extraordinary and magical.

My thanks to Greg King, the mountain states USA Hasselblad rep, and Jim Chaconas at Samy's Camera for their help with this purchase. For more information on the Hasselblad H5D 50c WiFi and the Hasselblad lens line up visit their website at www.hasselblad.com.

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on assignment:

TRaversing THE PATAGONIA ICE CAP



Juan Aguada, Richie Graham and Stefan Blawath traversing a section of the Patagonia Ice Field called the Cordon Marconi (Marconi Pass) near El Chalten, Argentina.

A **VERTICAL SHOT EXPEDITION** AROUND THE BACK-SIDE OF CERRO TORRE IN SOUTHERN ARGENTINA



Back in 2008, I was invited to photograph the Patagonia Expedition Race and spent a few weeks just after the race exploring Torres del Paine National Park in southern Chile. We hiked the “W” trail and ended up just above the Glacier Gray, which is the southernmost terminus of the Patagonia Ice Cap. On a clear day, it is possible to see quite a bit of the ice cap from that vantage point above the Glacier Gray. As I looked over the vast expanse of ice and steep, rocky peaks I put traversing a section of the Patagonia Ice Cap high on my list of need-to-make-happen adventures.

The Patagonia Ice Cap, known as the Hielos Continentales or Campo de Hielo Sur in Spanish, is located in the southern Andes on the border between Argentina and Chile. It is the world’s second largest contiguous extrapolar ice field and the third largest sheet of ice over land on our planet. It covers an area of 6,500 square miles (16,800 square kilometers) and is easily visible from space. The ice cap feeds dozens of giant glaciers, which flow in both east and west directions to the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. The central part of the ice cap is located in [Los Glaciares National Park](#) near El Chaltén, Argentina (click on the Los Glaciares link for a map of this area).

In the fall of 2014, I got a call from Vlad Donkov, one of the owners of [Vertical Shot Expeditions](#). Vlad wanted to ask about marketing workshops in the United States. We had a great conversation and by the end of it he offered up the possibility of doing a trip for them. They had set up a trip to traverse the Patagonia Ice Cap on the backside of Cerro Torre, which is one of the most iconic mountaineering peaks in the world, but the person who had set it up couldn’t go on the trip. So, the offer was made to me, “Do

you want to do this Patagonia Ice Cap Traverse trip?” It took me all of two seconds to say yes, count me in.

Our route would take us from El Chaltén up to the north side of Cerro Fitz Roy (a.k.a. Cerro Chaltén, which means the smoking mountain) through the Marconi Pass and up onto the ice cap where we would loop around the backside of Cerro Torre and continue south to exit the ice cap above the Viedma Glacier (click on the following link for a [map of our route](#)). All in all, it was a 60-mile (96 km) hike, with about 10,000 feet (approximately 3,000 meters) of elevation gain and loss. It was an eight day hike with 65 to 75-pound (30 to 35 kg) backpacks. Our group chose a slightly longer, and harder, version of the traverse so that we would end up above the Viedma Glacier as it flowed into Lake Viedma.

The participants for this outing were from Europe and the United States. These were the brave souls who signed up for a serious adventure—and a trip that Vlad called Vertical Shot Expedition’s hardest trip to date. For this adventure, we had two guides: Juan Aguada and Rafael “Rafa” Heer, who were both top-notch. Juan had climbed both Fitz Roy and Cerro Torre and is one of the top Argentine alpine climbers. This was only the second time I had ever been on a guided trip, but for insurance and safety reasons I was definitely glad to have Juan and Rafa along with us to watch out for the participants.

On paper the trip didn’t look that bad. It seemed like we would take a little stroll up to the ice cap to a flat walk around the backside of Cerro Torre, and then zip back into town. Sixty miles didn’t sound that far when you have eight days to do it. The easy stroll idea flew out the window on the first day when we hoisted our giant



backpacks. For myself, I have carried huge packs in excess of a 100 pounds (45 kg) all over the place as a rock climbing photographer. But with the lightweight revolution in the last few decades, I hadn't had to carry a pack more than 50 lbs (23 kg) that often. My 65-lb Arc'teryx backpack, filled with the lightest weight mountaineering gear I could source, along with ten pounds or more of Nikon camera gear, felt like a boat anchor after the first five miles. We also wore super-stiff leather mountaineering boots because we had to use crampons on the ice cap.

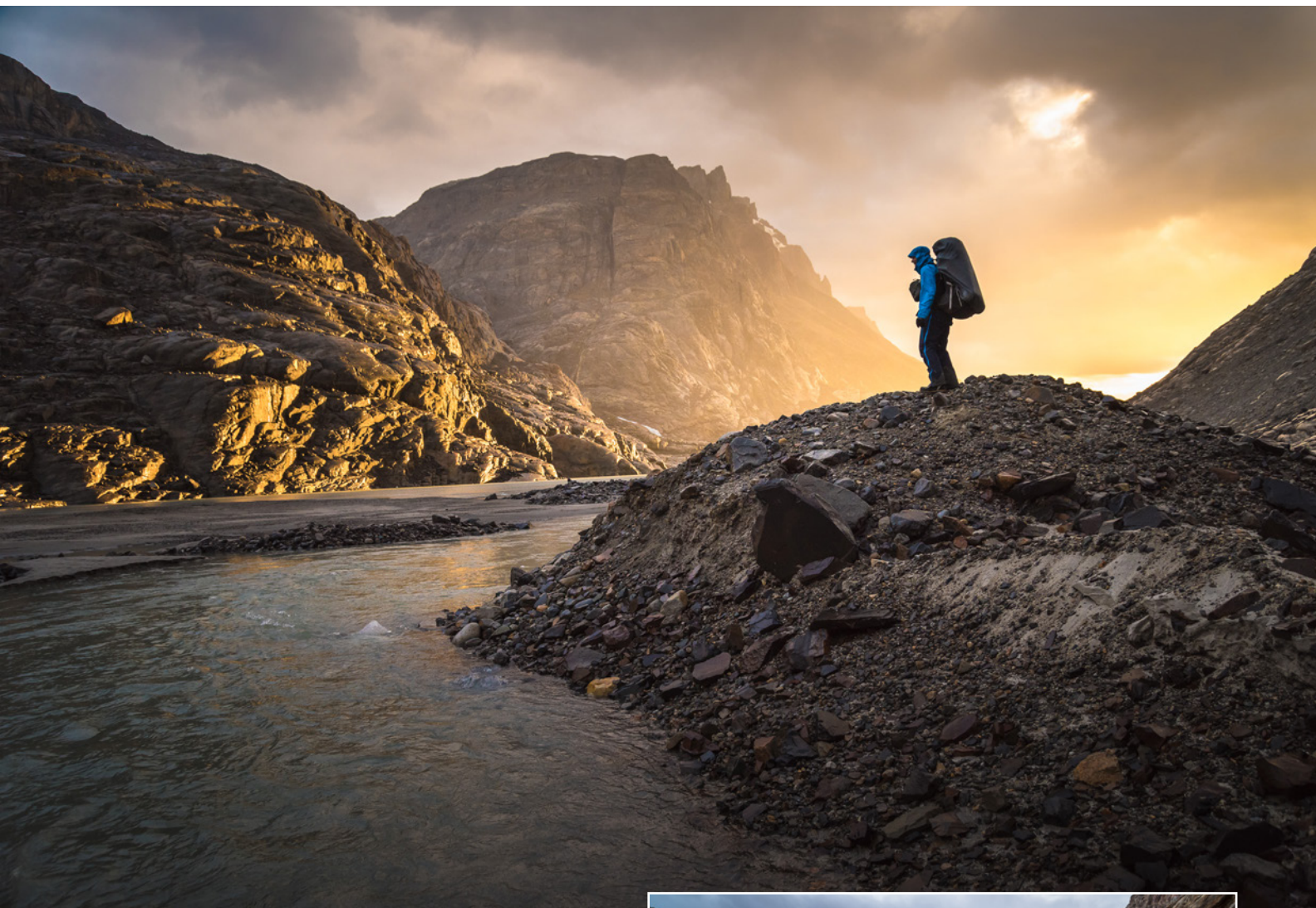
As it turned out we hiked anywhere from eight to ten hours or more every day of the trip. Of course, we were all photographers, and the whole point of the trip was to capture amazing images along the way, so we stopped frequently to grab shots here and there. That first day was relatively easy, perhaps the easiest of the entire trip. We were on a fairly well marked trail and found a camp not far from the foot of Marconi Pass near a fast moving river. The next day dawned a bit rainy and damp, but nothing I'd call extreme by any means for Patagonia.

Getting up on the ice cap was a bit more exciting than I thought it would be. We ended up climbing a 65 to 70 degree waterfall for 2,900 feet (884 meters) with full packs on. For part of this ascent we were roped up, and thankfully so. To our left was a huge cliff with a hanging ice fall that released large seracs on an hourly basis. To our right was a dead vertical 3,000 foot (915 m) cliff. The running waterfall was the only way up. For some of our crew, I am guessing climbing through that waterfall and in such an exposed position for so long with such heavy packs pushed them to their limits. It was a serious day with serious consequences should anyone slip up. Once

we gained the top of the waterfall and hiked up onto the ice cap, other dangers presented themselves. Within the first hour or so, two of our participants fell into narrow crevasses and one tweaked his ankle. We were roped up at this point, but when one participant fell into a large crevasse, the guides sprung into action and set up a pulley system to winch him out. That second day was one of the toughest of the trip. We were on the go for over eleven hours.

That night we ended up at a Chilean Refugio, which was basically a Quonset hut, and took a rest day there the next day to let a swollen ankle heal a bit. On that rest day, we dropped into a nearby serac field and did a bit of ice climbing (see page 33). The weather looked a bit dodgy that night so we stayed hunkered down in a boulder field to shield our tents from the winds. The view from the Chilean Refugio was astounding. Laid out before us was the Fitz Roy group, and every once in a while we could see the top of Cerro Torre pop out of the clouds for a few seconds. Below our perch up on a rock outcropping, the Patagonia Ice Cap was sprawled out before us in all its glory. Surrounded by nothing but rock and ice, it felt as if we were in central Antarctica.

After our rest day, we headed down to the Cerro Torre camp. It was a six-hour hike and the weather, which started out a bit rough that morning, was crystal clear with bluebird, cloudless skies when we arrived to our camp on the backside of Cerro Torre. As a climber, I have dreamed of seeing Cerro Torre and Fitz Roy in person. For me, getting to spend a few days below the west face of Cerro Torre was like being in the cathedral of the mountain gods. It was and is a spiritual place. We all felt incredibly lucky to have had such amazing weather. The winds were



Page 29: The top of Cerro Fitz Roy as seen from the Rio Electrico near El Chalten, Argentina. Above: Richie Graham standing on a mound near the base of the Corra Blance Sur Glacier at the Marconi Pass just before we climbed up and onto the Patagonia Ice Cap. Right: A fast moving river flowing down from Marconi Pass on the north side of Cerro Fitz Roy.





Above: Richie Graham and the crew hiking up a section of the Patagonia Ice Field called the Corra Blance Sur Glacier at the Marconi Pass near El Chalten, Argentina. Right: Cracks and striated crevasses in the Patagonia Ice Cap around the Chilean Hut on top of Marconi Pass.



Right: Juan Agauda stepping over a large crevasse en route to the Patagonia Ice Cap. Below: Juan Agauda ice climbing on a glacier near the Chilean Hut atop Marconi Pass on the Patagonia Ice Cap.



light, the skies relatively clear and the temperatures, while cold, were quite mild. When it came time to pack up the next morning I didn't want to leave. The skies were ablaze as the sun rose with lenticular clouds lit up like UFOs (see page 38). That sunrise resulted in the best image of the entire trip.

At this point we were four days into our eight day trip. From the Cerro Torre camp, we hiked 20-plus km (12.5-plus miles) to get off the ice cap and start our way around the bottom of the range just above the Viedma glacier. This long 20-plus km day was the toughest and longest day of the trip. Once at camp, we all took baths in a slightly frigid lake, which revived us from the long hike. The next day we headed up to the top of the Paso Huemul, which overlooked the Viedma Glacier. The vista from the top of that pass offered an incredible view of the striated Viedma glacier and all the moraine intertwined with it creating stripes of black and white as it flowed down to the terminus of the glacier.

The descent off the top of the Paso Huemul is one of the hairiest descents I have ever done, and I have done some pretty sketchy, hairball descents in mountain ranges all over the world. It was a 3,000-foot (914 m) descent with full packs on extremely steep terrain, some of which we rappelled, where any slip would send you over a giant cliff. Luckily, on the top portion of the descent we had some stiff trees to hold onto and slow our momentum. Further down the exposure only got more and more extreme. I asked our guides about the trail and why in a national park they would allow average hikers on such a trail. They said it was unkept, and on average, three to four hikers a year die on that section of trail. Needless to say, we were all relieved to get to the bottom of that descent. The last

few days hiking back to El Chaltén were uneventful but exhausting. Our packs never seemed to get any lighter even though we rolled into town without any food left.

In the end, it was a much harder trip than even I had anticipated. It felt much more like a mountaineering trip than a hiking trip. I lost ten pounds or more but still felt stronger each day. The weather was uncharacteristically phenomenal. In fact, Alex Honnold and Colin Haley, two world-class alpinists, did their blazingly fast 20 hr 40 minute [Torre Traverse](#) while we were on the ice cap. We accidentally hit the best weather window of the entire Patagonia climbing season.

Relaying the intense nature of this trip is quite difficult. As an adventure photographer I travel to some pretty exotic locations but even so, it is only once or so each year that I visit a location that feels like another planet. Looking back on this trip, it feels like I was in another world. In all, I shot over 6,000 images and only a few of those are shown here. To get a better sense of the amazing landscape on the ice cap and to see more images from this adventure check out my [Patagonia Ice Cap](#) web gallery.

My thanks to Vlad and the Vertical Shot Expedition team for bringing me in to do this trip and also to Juan, Rafa and the participants for making this trip happen. This truly was a trip of a lifetime and it looks like we will be doing it again in 2017. If you are interested contact Vlad at Vertical Shot Expeditions or myself and we'll stay in touch about that forthcoming trip as we get it set up. I am very much looking forward to my next trip with Vertical Shot this August, which will be much less intense physically, where we will be sailing in the [Lofoten Islands](#). Check out the Workshops section of this Newsletter (on page 10) for more info on that trip.

Right: Wild patterns in the snow, which mimic the sharp, jagged peaks of the Torre group, at the Cerro Torre camp on the Patagonia Ice Cap. Below: Juan Aguada, Richie Graham and Stefan Blawath traversing a section of the Patagonia Ice Field. Only a few hundred feet further on we saw the west face of Cerro Torre for the first time in perfect weather.





Above: The seldom seen west face of Cerro Torre rising above the Patagonia Ice Cap at sunrise near El Chalten, Argentina. Right: The western (backside) of Cerro Torre rising above the Patagonia Ice Cap at sunset.



Right: The top of Cerro Torre's West Face as seen at sunset from the Patagonia Ice Cap near El Chalten, Argentina.
Below: Juan Aguada working his way across a Tyrolean Traverse on the Rio Tunel after traversing the Patagonia Ice Cap near El Chalten, Argentina.



portfolio





Breaking through the Noise

by Michael Clark

Let's be honest here, breaking through all the noise in this age of digital media is difficult. The hope is that your work gets noticed because it's amazing. If your work isn't amazing then you can make all the noise in the world and no one is going to give you the time of day. *This is ipso defacto, point #1.* Create a unique set of images or motion content that sets you apart and the rest of this exercise will be substantially easier. I realize this is easier said than done but this is where the hard work comes into play.

Once the work is where it needs to be, publish it on your website, on social media, and use it for e-promos and postcards that go out to prospective clients. Early on in my career, I would target specific clients and send one mailer a day to a client, which were mostly editorial clients back then. I found this to be a very effective marketing strategy. I'd suggest listing your top 25 or 50 clients and going after them very specifically – and to make sure that your amazing images are appropriate for them.

As for getting your images seen, that is not difficult these days. Send a postcard or an e-promo. It is actually much easier to get your work seen than it has ever been before. If the work is good enough you will get a response. I don't advocate the "hard sell" technique. If you have to "sell" the clients on your images then the images are not good enough. Your work should sell itself. If you present your

work in person, then your work and your polite, confident manner should seal the deal along with a few funny, adventurous stories if they seem appropriate. Art buyers and photo editors like to see new work; they don't like to be stalked as the gate keepers to the kingdom. Show your work to show your work, without any preconceptions.

Getting an actual assignment is a whole other kettle of fish though. You will not only have to present yourself as a true professional, but the client will need some assurance that you can take on said assignment and pull it off with ease. Hence, if you are just starting out and don't have a solid list of clients and tearsheets on your website, then you might have to start small and build up to make that dream client a reality. That is just the nature of the game.

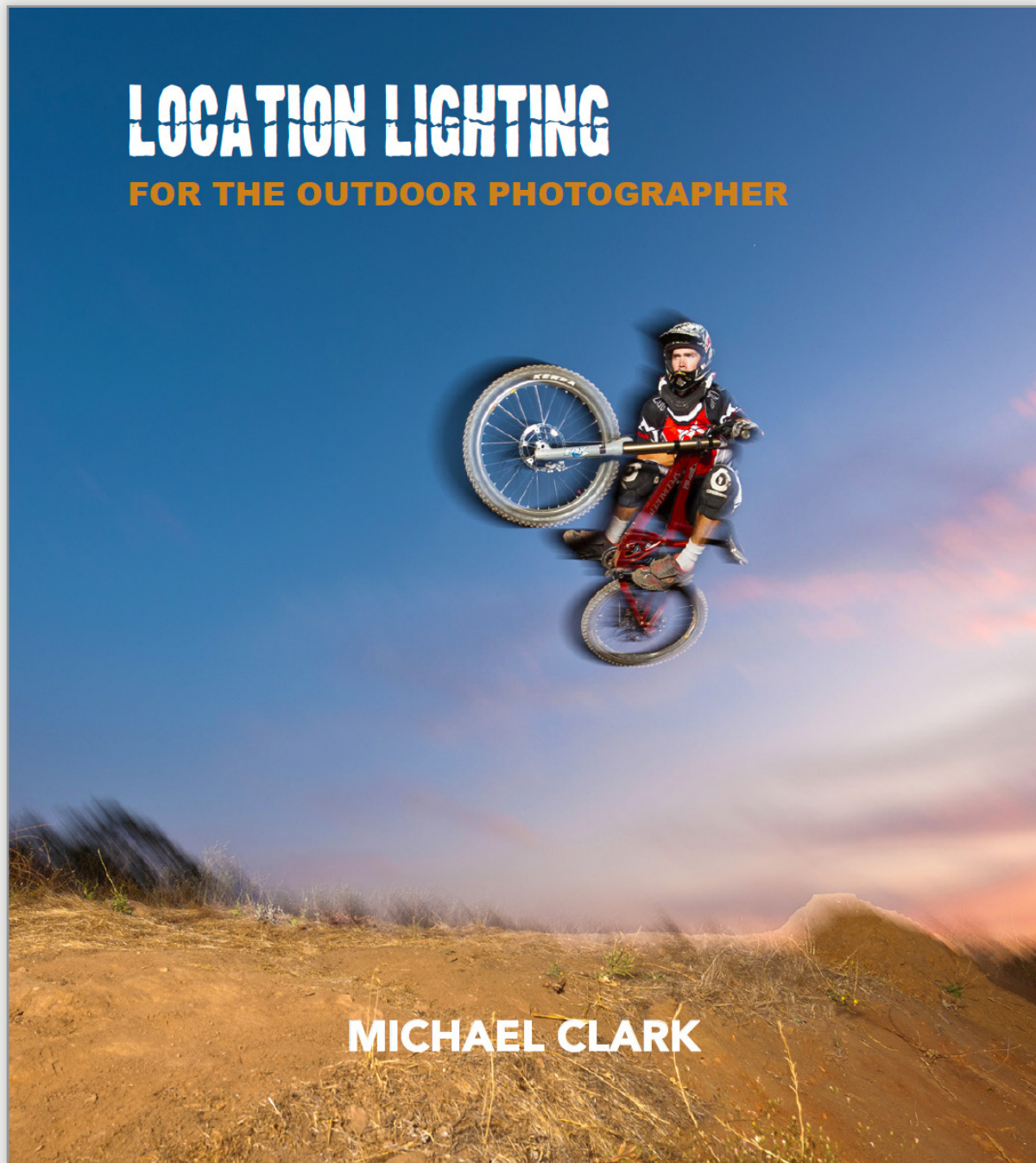
In the end, it has always been difficult to break through the noise in this industry. The ideal situation is to create buzz around you and your work, which means others are talking about you favorably and recommending you for various jobs. That takes consistently top-notch work from assignment to assignment and vigilant marketing via social media and everywhere else. Winning a few big awards along the way also doesn't hurt. There is no set strategy or method to pulling this off but as I said in the beginning, it all starts with the work.



Wild and crazy lenticular clouds above Cero Torre and Cerro Fitz Roy near El Chalten, Argentina.

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