

NEWSLETTER

MICHAEL CLARK

PHOTOGRAPHY



SUMMER 2026



contents

SUMMER 2026 NEWSLETTER

4 editorial

Pinch Me. An editorial on the path that led me to photograph both the NASA Artemis I and Artemis II launches at Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

6 news

Recent news including my images that won the Commercial Series category in the ASMP Best Of competition.

8 workshops

Detailed information on upcoming photography workshops, online photography courses and seminars I'll be teaching in 2026 and 2027.

16 equipment review

A review of the Elinchrom Transmitter Pro X. My thoughts and perspective on the new updated transmitter that works with all Elinchrom strobes.

24 on assignment

Documenting the NASA Artemis II Launch. This is a detailed account of my experience photographing the NASA Artemis II launch at Kennedy Space Center in Florida. In this feature article I discuss all of the technical details on how I documented the launch as well as the thinking behind the images.

44 portfolio

The rollout of the NASA Artemis II rocket at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida on Saturday, January 17, 2026. Traveling at a maximum speed of one mile per hour the Crawler-Transporter 2 takes around twelve hours to move the Artemis II rocket from the Vehicle Assembly Building out to Launch Complex LC-39B.

46 perspective

Blessed. An editorial about contentedness, finding your bliss and the hard work that goes into crafting a life of adventure.

47 parting shot

The plume left behind after the NASA Artemis II launched in Cape Canaveral, Florida at Kennedy Space Center on April 1, 2026.

copyright notice:

This Newsletter was created by Michael Clark for the promotion of Michael Clark Photography. No reproduction of any part of this Newsletter is allowed without written permission. All images Copyright © 2026 Michael Clark Photography. All Rights Reserved. Contact me at info@michaelclarkphoto.com. To see more of my work view my website at www.michaelclarkphoto.com.

Cover Image: The Artemis II rocket with four astronauts including Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover, Christina Koch, and Jeremy Hansen, launching from LC-39B at Kennedy Space Center on Cape Canaveral on April 1, 2026. Opposite Page: A portrait of a Bhutaneese gentleman wearing a masked dance costume in the Talo Sangnacholing Dzong. Such masks are primarily used in religious and cultural festivals and are believed to ward off evil spirits, purify negative energies, and bring blessings and good fortune.





editorial

Pinch Me

Dream assignments my younger self would have never believed

This spring was a busy time with a mix personal projects, photo tours and assignments. This included two trips to Florida, for the NASA Artemis II roll-out and launch (as featured in this issue of the Newsletter), then Nepal, Bhutan and Hokkaido, Japan as well as an assignment with Red Bull in Alaska—which was featured in the last [issue](#) of the Newsletter. There have been a few assignments since getting back from the Artemis II launch and this summer and fall is ramping up to be quite busy.

One of the highlights of this year so far was definitely the opportunity to photograph the NASA Artemis II launch out at Kennedy Space Center on Cape Canaveral, Florida. I was lucky enough to get a Press Pass to photograph the launch from the Press site, which is the closest site most people can see the launch from—and this was my second time photographing an Artemis launch. As someone who desperately wanted to be an astronaut, it was a massive deal for me to be out there for this launch—especially since the four astronauts were headed to the Moon. The feature article in this issue of the Newsletter goes into great detail about the trip and the experience, as well as all the technical aspects of photographing a launch like this—it was a total blast.

About a decade ago, I connected with some contacts at

NASA Johnson Space Center in Houston and was able to go out and meet with the photography team there—ever since I have been working all the angles I could to develop that relationship. When I started reaching out to folks, I couldn't even dream that I would have the access I have gotten so far. As someone who has been a working pro photographer for thirty years now, there are those gigs—like this Artemis launch (and the Red Bull Alaska assignment)—where the air is just buzzing with electricity. These types of assignments are the ones where you just have to pinch yourself to make sure it is real. It is that anticipation for assignments like these that keeps this career interesting—and keeps me motivated to push my creativity and develop new opportunities. Fingers crossed there are a few more epic assignments this year. Here's hoping you enjoy this issue and it offers up an escape for an hour or two. Until next time....

Opposite Page: A close up image of the NASA Artemis II rocket as it is rolled out of the Vehicle Assembly Building at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida on Saturday, January 17, 2026.

Recent Clients: Red Bull, New Mexico Tourism, New Scientist Magazine, Geo Magazine, 5280 Magazine, Andy Biggs Safaris, Nobechi Creative and the Southern Ute Indian Tribe.



ASMP Best Of 2026

Astronaut images win another award in ASMP Best Of Photo Competition

Recently, I was notified that my series of images (shown on the following page) won the “Commercial Series” category in the 2026 ASMP Best Of photography competition. This series of images were of Mike Shinabery in an Astronaut suit at White Sands National Park near Alamogordo, New Mexico. These images were created for New Mexico Tourism.

I have been a member of the American Society of Media Photographers (ASMP) for over twenty years now. The organization was started in 1944 by luminaries in photojournalism and included such photographers as Margaret Bourke-White, Robert Capa, Henri Cartier-Bresson and Edward Weston in the early days. ASMP was formed to fight for photographer’s wages and working conditions. Back when I joined in the early 2000s, it was a feather in the cap to get into ASMP. The organization also offers lots of perks like very solid business insurance designed for professional photographers and discounts on professional equipment via Apple and B&H Photo. The ASMP “Find a Photographer” search engine also got me a lot of jobs as art directors and photo editors often used that tool to find reputable photographers. If you were in ASMP that meant you were a solid, skilled and professional photographer, which is why I joined. Of course ASMP has had a huge affect on the industry. They helped bring about the Copyright Act of 1976, which “placed

ownership of a photographer’s creative work back in the photographer’s hands.” To this day the organization, along with several other photography organizations has a lobbyist in Congress who works to protect and modernize copyright law on our behalf.

I have entered images into the ASMP Best Of competition since 2006, when I entered an image created for the first version of Adobe Lightroom that won and it was even chosen as the cover image for the [ASMP Bulletin](#)—their printed magazine. Since then I have submitted images to the competition every few years when ASMP ran the competition. It is an honor to be included among the winners again twenty years later.

To see all of the winning images check out the [2026 ASMP Best Of Winner’s Gallery](#) on the ASMP website. My sincere thanks to ASMP and the judges for picking my images to be included among the winners this year. The judges this year included Mary Virginia Swanson, Darius Himes (the Head of Photographs at Christie’s), Anna Alexander, Kat Dalager, Jennifer Perlmutter and Karen Williams. There are many amazing images shown in the winners gallery. Congratulations to Kili Yuyan who won Best in Show with his incredible images of indigenous peoples. Congratulations also to the other winners showcased on the ASMP website.



workshops

Photography Workshops

An overview of workshops and online classes with Michael Clark

Each year I teach a few workshops on a variety of topics including adventure sports photography, landscape photography, digital workflow and artificial lighting. Below is a listing of the in-person and online workshops I will be teaching in 2026 and 2027. 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 WORKSHOPS

In-Person or Online via Zoom

Email info@michaelclarkphoto.com to Schedule

In addition to my in-person group workshops listed here I also teach one-on-one workshops both in-person or virtually via Zoom. In the past photographers have come to Santa Fe, New Mexico for one-on-one workshops custom designed for exactly what they want to learn—these have been one-day to three-day private workshops. Alternatively, I have also done one-on-one private workshops in other locations as well—chosen by the photographer to meet their needs. These custom workshops are a great way to dial in your photography because we can cover way more ground specific to your needs and in a shorter time-frame than we can in a group workshop. Prices start at \$900/half day and \$1,400 per full day. Half days are five hours or less and full days are eight to ten hours.

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. Pricing for online sessions starts at \$150/hour and discounts apply for multiple hour sessions.

THE INVISIBLE CAMERA

A Nobechi Creative Online Workshop

September 12 & 13, 2026

Present day digital photography, with its complex array of settings and options, can overwhelm even the most seasoned of photographers. Once you settle on a camera brand, understanding your camera to its fullest extent and knowing how to best operate it can be a challenge. Luckily, nearly all cameras made in the last decade are incredible photographic instruments and are capable of photographing just about any subject under (and not under) the sun.

In this online weekend intensive, we will break down all of the confusing elements, unlock the features you may be



Being able to see the final image before you even put your camera up to your eye is the mark of an advanced photographer. The ability to pre-visualize the image requires practice, a deep knowledge of how the camera sees the world, and the ability to quickly manipulate the camera so that what you want to create comes through in the final image. My new online class "The Invisible Camera" aims to help participants get to that place where the final image matches the image you conceived beforehand. This class will cover a lot of ground and will help all participants understand what goes into capturing an image they have dreamt up.

missing, and make the cumbersome setting hunting disappear, so that the camera essentially becomes "invisible" and you can concentrate on composition, framing, and expression, rather than trying to remember that one setting in the user manual.

Not only will we demystify the process of how to get the best out of your camera, but we will also analyze and discuss some of the most impactful images created in the last hundred years to see how they were created and what techniques were used to capture the image.

In this course Michael covers the following topics and much more including visualizing the final image without the camera, a deep dive on the basics (Aperture, Shutter Speed and ISO), choosing an aperture to give your auto focus more room for error, using advanced auto focus techniques, anticipating the action with hyperfocal focus settings, photography in low-light, astrophotography, and much more.

This online course will have three 3-hour live sessions conducted via Zoom covering an array of topics

concerning digital photography for those seeking to create the best possible images. Video recordings of each session will be made and uploaded to a participants-only private channel in case you miss a session or wish to go back and watch something over again. Video recordings will be made available indefinitely so even if you cannot attend all sessions, you can still sign up for this course and get all the information you need.

This course is intended not just for beginners, but seasoned photographers who feel there are features on their cameras they are missing, or have recently switched from DSLRs to mirrorless cameras and want to better understand the differences and how to utilize them to their advantage, this class will start with the basics and quickly move onto more advanced techniques that can help you take your photography to a higher level. The goal is to dial in your camera so you can simplify the photographic process and concentrate on the image you are trying to create.

Workshop Cost: \$450 USD per person.

For all the details and logistics and to register for this online class visit [Nobechi Creative](#).

RAFTING THE GRAND CANYON

Visionary WILD - Grand Canyon National Park, USA

April 25 - May 8, 2027

This trip will be led by master landscape photographer Justin Black and top adventure photographer Michael Clark, both veteran Grand Canyon river runners. The planned itinerary absolutely maximizes the photographic potential and overall quality of experience to be had

during twelve days on the Colorado River in the mile-deep Grand Canyon.

Applying our experience of our prior Grand Canyon raft trips, and in collaboration with our hand-picked boat crew from Arizona Raft Adventures (AZRA), we've developed an itinerary that takes advantage of favorable spring conditions and sets us up for the best landings for photo excursions and camps along the river. Detailed planning and the expert skill of experienced boat crews we've worked with before are critical, because there's no going back upstream on the Colorado River.

Our itinerary starts in Flagstaff, Arizona, at the Little America Hotel. The day before our departure for the river, we will convene to get to know each other (and catch up with returning friends), and Justin and Michael will make a presentation to get your creative juices flowing and prepare you for photography in the Canyon. This will be followed by an orientation by AZRA staff to go over the game plan, safety, answer questions, and distribute dry bags for packing your personal gear. We'll set off early the following morning for Lee's Ferry, where our raft and crew will be waiting for us at our launch point.

A little about the rafts: We will travel aboard two 32-foot-long motorized rafts built around a strong aluminum frame with a below-deck cargo hold for important items that tolerate getting wet, like camp chairs and cans of beer. Personal gear and camera bags will be stored in dry-bags strapped down on the deck above the waterline. A crew of two expert AZRA guides will crew each raft, equipped with a quiet four-stroke Honda motor for steering purposes. The motor is shut off as we drift with the current down the river in stretches of calm water. We will



I am very excited to go back to the Grand Canyon with Justin Black and Visionary WILD in 2027. This trip will be an amazing adventure packed full of incredible photography opportunities. In my experience as a former backpacking guide in the Canyon, rafting it instead of hiking it is the way to go. Each night we will have a very comfortable camp and excellent food—and we will be able to explore various parts of the canyon that are very difficult to reach except from river level.

be running a great deal of whitewater, and where you sit in the raft and how you dress will determine whether you get soaked or stay dry (or dryish). In the mid-afternoon sun, getting soaked by a big splash is a great way to cool off. What are the chances of taking an unexpected swim in the river? Slim to none, if you follow your guides' instructions. On our many prior raft trips using AZRA's large, stable motor rafts and their immensely experienced boat crews, we have never flipped a boat, only one participant has ever gone for an unintentional swim, and he wasn't following orders to hold on in a rapid.

Once on the Colorado River, we quickly enter Marble Canyon and from there the canyon rim towers higher and higher as we pass through ever more ancient rock strata. From the raft, we'll take in the stunning mesas and rock formations all around us, watch bighorn sheep just a few meters away at the water's edge, marvel at condors soaring and ravens playing overhead, and watch the light and shade play across the water and reflect in hues of gold and red on the canyon walls. Landings at some of our favorite side canyons, waterfalls, and rock formations along the way will provide the opportunity to stretch our legs

and explore Grand Canyon's intimate landscapes. Each afternoon, we'll pull into riverside beaches, which will serve as our camps. These are selected in advance for group comfort and excellent photo opportunities close to camp in the evening, and to position us strategically to target the next morning's photography location.

As we arrive in camp each afternoon, we'll form a "bag line" as a team to unload personal gear and camp equipment from the raft to the beach. This group bonding experience is not to be underestimated. After that, we each locate a nice personal piece of Colorado River beach to put down our tarp, comfy sleeping pad, pillow, sheet, and sleeping bag (all provided, as are tents, though few seem to bother with tents after a night or two). Then, while the boat crew prepares a fabulous and well-deserved dinner, we'll photograph in the evening light. We'll gather the camp chairs in a circle to chat over a beer or glass of wine, have a rinse in the river, or just relax and enjoy the peace, solitude, and crystal-clear night skies.

When our time on the river comes to an end, it will be too soon. Back at the hotel in Flagstaff, after a proper shower and calls to loved ones to confirm that we've reemerged into civilization, we'll meet for a final celebratory dinner with our boat crews at one of Flagstaff's finer restaurants. After breakfast the next morning, we'll meet for a classroom session to edit and project images for review. Wrapping up by mid-afternoon, we'll say "until we meet again," and our merry band will part company with hard drives full of amazing images, heads full of incredible memories, spirits uplifted by the experience, and hearts just a little bit sad that our adventure had reached its conclusion. We hope you'll join us for this trip of a lifetime!

Workshop Costs: \$10,595 to \$10,995 depending on lodging.

For all the details and logistics and to register for this adventure visit the [Visionary Wild website](#).

KENYA SAMBURULAND MASTERCLASS

Andy Biggs Safaris - Kenya

October 15 - 25, 2027

In October 2027 we have a very unique safari experience lined up, which will be a cultural photography trip to northern Kenya and home to the Samburu. This trip combines a heavy dose of instruction, as well as setting up photographic scenarios. The Samburu are a beautiful semi nomadic tribe, similar to the Masai, who live in some of the most beautiful and remote landscapes on the African continent. We will split our time between two different camps, which are remote, yet authentically luxurious in a timeless way. Our days will be filled with cultural immersion, taking photographs as bystanders, as well as inviting those we meet along the way to do some formal sit-down portraits in any place that is photographically rich. One day it may be on top of a hill at sunset and another day it may be an impromptu backdrop at camp and we have Samburu warriors drop by to have their portraits taken with natural or artificial light. The goal is to have a great time and to have unique moments with new friends that we meet along the way. And of course going home with photographs that go alongside these wonderful memories. This is a once in a lifetime experience. This trip is visiting areas that we know well and have experience working in.

Guest instructor Michael Clark will be joining us, making



This Kenyan portrait masterclass will be a very unique safari experience in northern Kenya. The image above, crafted by Andy Biggs, shows just one example of the possible portrait images we can create with the incredible Samburu tribe. We will be bringing battery-powered strobes to create a wide variety of portraits of the tribe and to further our understanding of portraiture in general.

this a teaching workshop for those who want to learn flash photography. We are bringing along studio lighting equipment, so you only need to bring your cameras and lenses. We will be teaching studio lighting for two days at the beginning of the trip, so show up and learn in a controlled environment before we head into the field.

The cost of this all-inclusive safari is \$15,950 per person. This fee includes all in-country ground and air transportation as well as hotel accommodation (double occupancy) and all meals. Due to the limited number of spaces

available, if a solo guest is willing to share a room and we can match with another guest of the same gender, we will do so. If a solo guest is unwilling to share, then a single supplement will be charged \$1,800 (please contact us if you would like to have your own accommodation as we have a very limited number of single slots available).

For the full details and logistics or to register for this exciting adventure please visit [Andy Biggs website](#) where you can find many more details. This will be a once in a lifetime epic adventure—hope to see you there.

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! It was a great pleasure being part of this workshop with so many other amazing photographers. 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

"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 I.

"Just wanted you know how much fun I had during the workshop last weekend! I learned a lot and look forward to doing other workshops with you." – Jason Quevedo, Philadelphia Mentor Series Trek

"Your workshop at Santa Fe was too good and I came away with a lot of knowledge and renewed energy. The level of expertise that you and Michael shared was top-notch and I hope to repeat this experience again. Thanks for such a great workshop!" – Participant in the Balloon Fiesta workshop taught by Andy Biggs and myself.

For more information on my upcoming workshops please visit the [Workshops](#) page on my blog. For any questions regarding my upcoming workshops please [email](#) me.

If you would like to sign up for a private workshop please contact me and we can figure out a time and location that works for your needs. I have done several private one-on-one workshops over the last few years and participants really get a lot out of them since we can delve into the subjects and topics they want to explore—and help take their photography to an entirely new level.

ADVERTISEMENT

A Professional Photographer's Workflow.

8TH EDITION

A PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER'S WORKFLOW

USING ADOBE LIGHTROOM & PHOTOSHOP



MICHAEL CLARK

**BRAND NEW!
REVISED
OCT 2025**

Reality Check. Make Your Images Shine.

PURCHASE & DOWNLOAD THIS E-BOOK AT WWW.MICHAELCLARKPHOTO.COM

The Elinchrom Transmitter Pro X

A review of the new simplified and easy-to-use wireless transmitter from Elinchrom



Disclaimer: I have been an Ambassador for Elinchrom for the last twenty years. In that time I have created images for the launch of many of their products and I have given feedback and input that has gone into several of their strobes and transmitters. I have had an incredible relationship with Elinchrom and they have helped to support my career and my photography all along the way. In addition to Elinchrom, I also

have to mention MAC Group, who are the distributor for Elinchrom here in the USA. MAC Group has also been an incredible resource and have helped over the years supporting me and my work. I would not be where I am now without the incredible support and the partnership I have formed with both Elinchrom and MAC Group. Regardless, this review will be my honest opinion of the new Elinchrom gear.



ELINCHROM TRANSMITTER PRO



ELINCHROM TRANSMITTER PRO X

The Elinchrom Transmitter Pro X, released in March 2026, is Elinchrom's updated and simplified strobe transmitter that works with all of their strobes, including older Hi-Sync options that have been discontinued for a few years now. For the last decade, I have been using the Elinchrom Transmitter Pro (shown above on the left), which is a great transmitter, but I think many looked at it and just thought it was overly complicated. The older Transmitter Pro had incredible functionality—and pretty much all of that functionality has been put into the new version as well. But the old transmitter looked like something from the Speedlight world and it was not the most intuitive trigger. To get the most out of it you really had to read the manual. The new trigger eliminates a lot of that complication by using a touch screen and a simplified menu.

In the last several years, the trend among almost all of the

strobe manufacturers has been to simplify the interface on the back of the strobe and make them easier to use. Elinchrom has followed suit with their ONE, THREE and FIVE series strobes, which are respectively 100 Ws, 300 Ws and 500 Ws battery-powered strobes. The new Transmitter Pro X basically adjusted the user interface to match those new battery-powered strobes and offers up a much easier to use touch-screen interface. As can be seen on the previous page, to change the power setting on a strobe you simply chose the strobe listed on the screen and swipe right or left (up and down also works as well) to change the power setting. You don't have to push any other buttons beyond that.

The Transmitter X still allows you to change the power on the strobe in tenths of a stop (in Manual mode) just like the older transmitters. If you have your camera settings dialed in then the transmitter automatically jumps into



Above and on the following page: Daniel Coriz posing for a portrait at the Santa Fe Motocross track in Santa Fe, New Mexico. This was one of the first opportunities I had to work with the new Elinchrom Transmitter Pro X. These images were created using my FUJIFILM GFX100 II and the GF 45mm f/2.8 lens. The exposure settings were ISO 80, f/2.8 at 1/3200th second in HSS mode. For these images I started in TTL mode and then switched to manual on the transmitter.

High Speed Sync (HSS) if you raise your shutter speed beyond the normal flash sync speed—of course this is the case if you are using a strobe that can do HSS, which is most of the current Elinchrom units. If you have an older strobe, like the venerable Elinchrom ELB1200 or the even older ELB400 strobes, then you can use those in Hi-Sync (HS) mode when you raise your shutter above the standard sync speed. The new Transmitter Pro X also retains the ODS adjustments that are key to dialing in the Hi-Sync settings on those older strobes.

These days, I still use my Elinchrom ELB1200 battery-powered strobes on occasion when I need a lot of

light output, but I am also using the newer Elinchrom FIVE series strobes just as much if not more than my older 1200 Ws battery-powered strobes. I have found that two fives are about the same weight as one ELB1200 and put out similar power output when stacked together. Using the new Transmitter Pro X along with the FIVE strobes makes for a very simple, easy to use setup.

In the images above and on the following page, I used the FIVE strobe along with the new Transmitter Pro X to create some portraits of Daniel Coriz at the Santa Fe Motocross track in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The new transmitter makes it very easy to switch up settings and modes. For



these shots I had the transmitter in full manual mode as we needed the strobes to be at full output with the bright sun in the background. These were both created using a FUJIFILM GFX100 II and a GF 45mm f/2.8 lens. The exposure settings were ISO 80, f/2.8 at 1/3200th second using the high speed sync (HSS) flash mode.

Shown on page 21, you can see all of the buttons and the dial layout on the Transmitter Pro X. The power on/power off button has the Elinchrom logo on it and is found on the right side of the unit just next to the USB-C port. This is the first unit to have a USB-C port, which is used for upgrading the firmware. On the left side of the

transmitter, there are four buttons that allow for choosing which strobe you want to adjust (if you prefer to use bottoms instead of the touch screen)—or if you are working with gloves on. On top of the unit there are three buttons and the scroll wheel. Inside the scroll wheel is one of those three buttons. The G button on top left allows for changing the strobe group (i.e. Group 1,2,3,4 or all) and the sun button on the top right turns the modeling light on and off. For a full rundown on how the transmitter works Elinchrom has created a helpful [YouTube video](#) showing how to operate the transmitter. The Menu is fairly simple to use, simply push the center button on the top (inside the scroll wheel) and you can touch any item

to adjust that setting or turn it on and off (as with the TTL setting).



One of the nice things that comes with the new transmitter is the carrying case (shown above). It is a form fit, semi-rigid case that perfectly fits the transmitter and protects it very well when stored in your camera bag. My old transmitters got pretty scratched up after being tossed into my camera bags with all of my other gear. Hence, kudos to Elinchrom for giving us a carry case to protect these \$295 USD transmitters.

There are a few things that are less easy to use than with the old trigger. For more than a decade now, photographers (using many different brands) have used a technique where they start in TTL flash mode, take a photo, then adjust the TTL output to dial in the flash settings, and then switch to manual so that the power output of the strobe doesn't change from image to image. I have been using this scenario outdoors with the Elinchrom ELB500 TTL and the FIVE strobes for years now. On the

old Transmitter Pro unit it was a simple button push to go from TTL to Manual mode on the trigger. On the new unit, you have to go into the menu and touch the TTL menu item to turn the TTL mode on and off, which switches the transmitter from TTL to Manual mode. This is a small thing but having to go into the menu to turn the TTL mode off and go into Manual is a bit of a pain if you are doing this often. It would have been great to have a TTL button on the top of the trigger to switch modes. I am not sure if one of the top or side buttons can be changed to turn the TTL off and on with a firmware update but that would be a nice option in the Menu to set one of the top buttons to do so.

I still need to do some more testing but the other feature that was buried in the old transmitter was the Speed and Normal transmission modes. These were two different modes that affected how fast the transmitter would send the signal and trigger the strobe. For most people this won't be missed, but for those few using leaf shutters (as in the Hasselblad X2D II) you definitely need the "Speed" mode to trigger the flash instantaneously when the leaf shutter is activated so it syncs up with the flash. I know there were not that many people using this Speed mode but it was essential back when I owned a Hasselblad and afterwards when I used the Hasselblad lenses with an adapter on my FUJIFILM GFX cameras.

In the last few days while writing this review, I received an email from Elinchrom announcing that they have added a "Global Shutter" mode to the Sony specific version of this new transmitter. To gain access to this new feature on the Sony triggers you will have to upgrade the firmware and then you can find this new mode in the menu. Of course, this only works with the Sony Alpha A9 III right now as



that is the only camera on the market with a Global Shutter (as of July 2026). With the announcement of this new feature Elinchrom also set up a full page with [details](#) on how to use this new Global Shutter mode with the Sony A9 III. While reading through that webpage, it is very interesting to see that the Sony trigger can still use HSS with the A9 III global shutter. This is much simpler than trying to figure out the right Flash Timing Settings on the

camera, but it does lower the power output of the flash. To my knowledge no other strobe manufacturer has anything like this new Global Shutter mode for their strobe systems, which makes the Elinchrom line up pretty unique if you are trying to use flash with the A9 III—and this bodes well for the future of Elinchrom strobes and the new global shutter cameras that will (hopefully) be coming out soon. This new feature tells me that deep



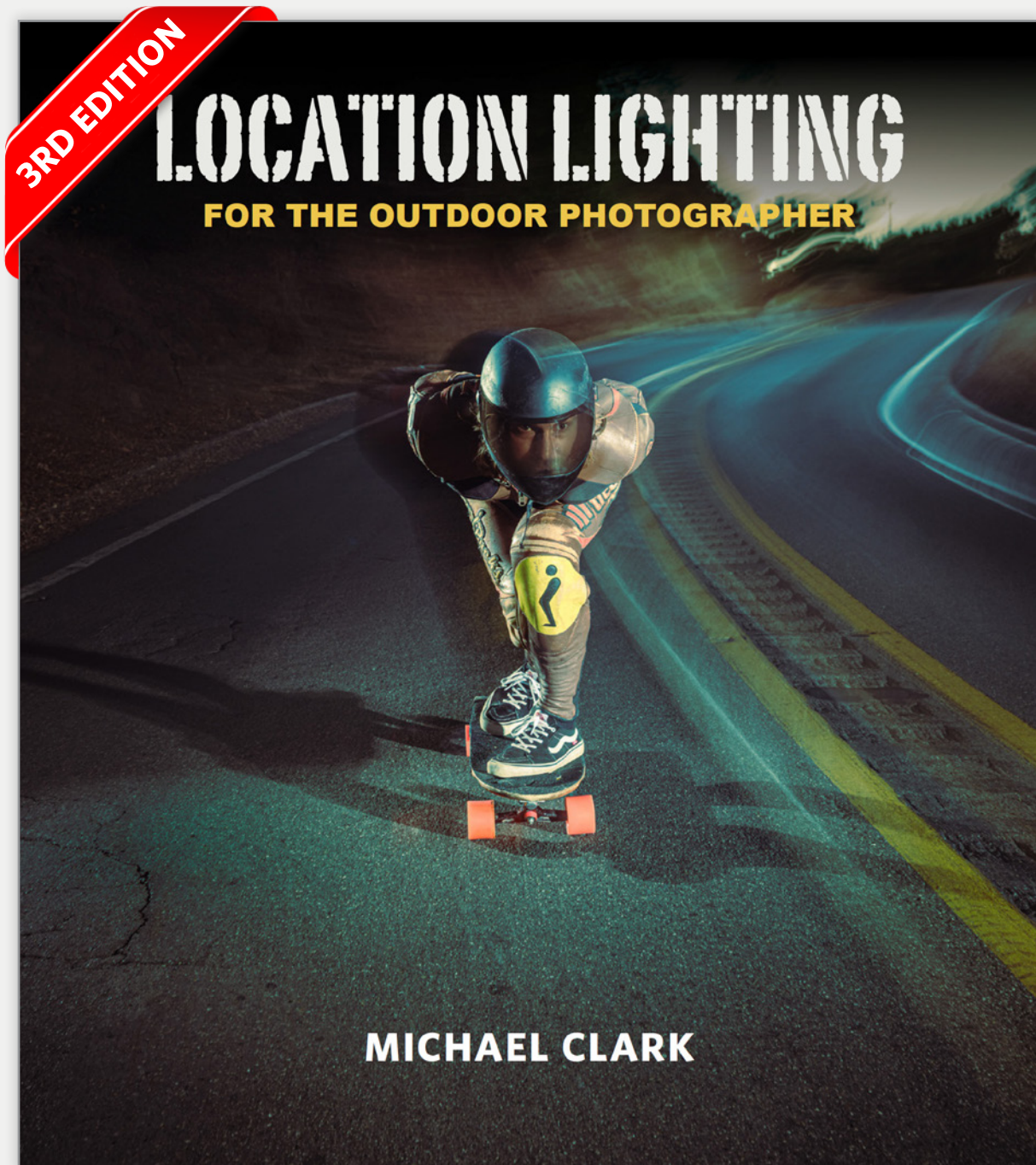
inside the unit, the Speed mode discussed above does still exist and possibly can be added to all of the units for leaf shutter cameras like the Hasselblad system.

Aside from these minor issues, the Elinchrom Transmitter Pro X is a solid upgrade. It is certainly much easier to dial in the strobe settings as you no longer have to press multiple buttons on top of the transmitter just to change the power output of your strobes. The colors and the

readout are very clear, especially when using multiple strobes. The touch screen on top is also easily readable even in bright lighting conditions outdoors. From what I can tell, it seems that Elinchrom has built in enough computing power and space in the menu to expand upon this transmitters functionality in the future. If you use Elinchrom strobes, or are looking to get into the system, then I would choose the Transmitter Pro X. For more information visit the [Elinchrom website](#).

ADVERTISEMENT

Location Lighting. For The Outdoor Photographer.



Realized. Taking your Images to the Next Level.

PURCHASE & DOWNLOAD THIS E-BOOK AT WWW.MICHAELCLARKPHOTO.COM



on assignment:

NASA ARTEMIS II



This year I have been fortunate to photograph both the rollout and the launch of NASA's Artemis II rocket. The rollout (as shown on the following pages) happened at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida on Saturday, January 17, 2026. And luckily for me the launch, which was supposed to happen in early February, got pushed back until April 1, 2026 due to hydrogen leaks in the first fueling tests. Since I have been traveling an incredible amount this year already, it was a matter of luck that I was able to get out to Florida for the launch. It is always an honor to be out at Kennedy Space Center and to document the incredible work of the NASA employees—and this launch especially was quite the experience.

Having photographed the Artemis I launch back in 2022, I was able to procure a media badge this year for Artemis II. In 2022, I ended up photographing the launch for Amazon Alexa, since Alexa was running in the unmanned capsule. This time around I did not have an end client for my images but still went out and photographed the launch hoping to build up my relationship with NASA. I have been working on this relationship for a long time. My first interaction with NASA was going out to Johnson Space Center and giving a presentation on my work to the in-house NASA photographers based there in Houston. Since, I have also been one of the judges for the NASA Photographer of the Year competition for the last seven years.

While the rollout of the rocket is less of a thrill than the actual launch, it is still quite an event to see the 322 foot (98 meters) tall rocket emerge from the Vehicle Assembly Building (VAB) and roll towards Launch Pad LC-39B. The NASA Crawler-Transporter 2, which moved the

Artemis II rocket out to the launch pad creeps along at a maximum speed of up to 1 mph (1.6 kph) so as it moves past the media below there are plenty of opportunities to photograph it from various angles. For the rollout, there were also quite a few NASA employees (as shown on page 29) that had worked on the rocket and who were there to see all of their hard work make its way to the launch pad. Notably, when it emerged from the VAB, we could see "America 250" emblazoned on the solid rocket boosters celebrating the 250th anniversary of the United States of America.

After the rollout, I was off to Nepal, Bhutan, and Japan for the next five weeks. I kept an eye on the fueling tests and the proposed launch dates to see if I would even be in the USA to photograph the launch. I expected some delays given the similar hydrogen leaks that plagued the Artemis I launch, but I didn't quite expect the delays to push back the launch two full months. Also, Artemis II was scheduled to be another night launch—similar to Artemis I. The Artemis I launch (shown on page 32) took place at 1:47 AM on November 16, 2022 and as you can see it was a very difficult launch to photograph because of the extreme contrast. For that launch the plumes of the rocket were so bright it was as if the sun came out at night. Once Artemis I cleared the tower you basically could not see the rocket at all—and all we could see from the ground was the intensely bright white plume of the rocket in a pitch black sky. Hence, I wasn't sure if it was even worth it to go back out and photograph the Artemis II launch if it ended up being a night launch as the photographs would basically look the same.

In the launch calendar that NASA published back in January, there were only two days where Artemis II was



PADA PADB
COMPLEX 39 WARNING SYSTEM
FLASHING RED
DANGER
FLASHING PATTERN
MECHANICAL

slated to launch in daylight. April 1 was the first daylight launch window and the other one was the last date at the end of April. Of course, regardless of when it launched we all hoped the launch would go smoothly and the four astronauts on board would come back safely. But, when I saw that April 1 launch window starting just before sunset I was secretly hoping that somehow the launch would be delayed until April 1st. And as we all now know, that April 1 launch date ended up being the day it launched.

Right up until a few days before the launch, I was hemming and hawing as to whether or not I should actually go out for the launch. When I applied for the media badge, I also applied to place remote cameras close to the rocket as well. Sadly I did not get clearance for placing remote cameras this time around but I still had a media pass to photograph the launch from the Press Site, which is 3.4 miles (5.47 km) away from the launch pad. The Press Site is basically the closest viewing point for the launch so it is still a pretty epic spot.

When I photographed the Artemis I launch it felt quite a bit different because it was an unmanned flight test. With Artemis II, there were four astronauts onboard including Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover, Christina Koch, and Jeremy Hansen and there was obviously a lot more at stake this time around. The Artemis I launch drew a lot of people to watch the launch but nothing like the Artemis II launch. It is estimated that 400,000 people gathered at various locations along the Florida space coast to watch Artemis II blast off. It was the largest crowd for any launch since the Apollo era launches fifty-three years ago. For those of us at the Press Site, we were instructed to arrive at least seven hours in advance. I arrived at the Press Site at 10:00 AM, a full eight and a half hours early.

Once on site, everyone is getting set up and placing tripods and gear out in the grassy field to claim a spot in front of the press buildings. The later you show up the more limited the choices are for claiming a spot. I chose a spot with a clear view of the rocket and with the lagoon in the foreground. From my prior experience photographing the Artemis I launch, I knew that a 400mm lens was about the right focal length for a horizontal composition. At the Artemis I launch, I had a Nikkor 500mm lens, which was an awesome tight composition but I thought after the fact that it was a bit too tight, especially considering the high resolution cameras we have these days. Hence for Artemis II, I brought three camera bodies for a variety of different compositions including my Nikon Z9 and Z8 as well as my FUJIFILM GFX100 II. For lenses, I had a Nikkor Z 70-200mm f/2.8, a Nikkor Z 400mm f/4.5, a Nikkor Z 24-70mm and the 1.4x teleconverter as well. For the GFX100 II medium format camera I brought the incredible GF250mm lens along with the 1.4x Teleconverter for that lens.

I had three tripods (two Gitzos and one Really Right Stuff) all set up next to each other as shown on page 32. I had the Nikon Z8 and the 70-200mm lens set up for a vertical composition at a wider focal length to capture the launch with some room to have the rocket a fair ways off the pad. I had the Nikon Z9 set up with the aforementioned 400mm lens in a horizontal composition—this was my tightest composition. And last, I had the GFX100 II set up for a vertical composition with the GF250 and the 1.4x teleconverter. The GF250 plus the teleconverter made that lens a 350mm focal length, which in 35mm terms is equivalent to about 273mm. I also had all three cameras tethered together with three Pocket Wizard transceivers so that when I triggered the Z9 the other two









cameras would fire off as well. All cameras were set to capture raw images at their fastest frame rates—which for the Nikons was 20 fps and for the GFX was 8 fps. Working at the maximum frame rates meant that I could create a timelapse video of the launch with my still images after the fact.

On the following two pages are a few of the frames from the Nikon Z9 with the 400mm lens. This horizontal composition gave me a great set up for a tight framing of the launch off the pad. I love how the rocket's plume billows even after the rocket is out of the frame. My exposure settings on the Z9 were 1/2500th second shutter speed, f/8 and ISO 200. These are the exact same settings I used for the Artemis I night launch back in 2022. This exposure setting is basically one full stop below the ambient exposure. These four images on the next two pages and the spread on pages 38-39 are but a few from the 288 frames I captured with the Z9 during the launch.

On the Z8 I set the exposure slightly differently, I underexposed just a bit more by using a shutter speed of 1/3200th second, and also at f/8 and ISO 200. The difference, only a third of a stop was minimal but I wanted to experiment for future launches. As no one had ever photographed a daytime launch of Artemis before, there wasn't a consensus among my fellow photographers as to what was the best exposure setting for a daytime launch. Because of this I set all of my cameras to slightly different exposure settings. I set the FUJIFILM GFX100 II to 1/2,000th second at f/8 and ISO 200. On page 37, you can see the vertical composition I had setup on my GFX100 II and the GF250mm lens and teleconverter.

With the GFX100 II, which is a 102 MP camera, I knew

that it could handle the dynamic range a bit better so I did not underexpose as much with that setup. I also knew that I could crop a horizontal image out of the GFX vertical composition and still have a roughly 57 MP image. Hence, there were plenty of megapixels to play with and the vertical composition just gave me more options.

It would have been great to have all three cameras set up at different areas of the Press Site to get a wider variety of images with people in the foreground and other elements in the frame but I was worried that the Pocket Wizard transceivers might not fire off the other two cameras. There were of course a lot of other news outlets present at the press site, including the NASA live feed, with huge lights and transmitters all around that could have interfered with my Pocket Wizards. As shown on page 41 the live NASA feed had an entire set built up with astronauts and newscasters commentating on the launch as it happened and for several hours before. In the background of this same image you can see the NBC and CBS buildings as well with similar newscast setups on the roofs of the buildings. Hence, that is why I kept my cameras relatively close together.

Luckily towards the end of the day, there was not as much heat distortion as there was early in the hottest part of the afternoon. When I took test shots earlier in the day, around 1 PM the rocket was noticeably soft from the heat distortion and the far distance we were from the rocket. This is not unusual when using long telephoto lenses in the middle of the day. Thankfully all of the images were tack sharp in the evening light when the rocket did launch.

In terms of autofocus, I focused on the rocket with each camera and then I turned the autofocus off on all the





cameras that were on the tripods just to make sure nothing shifted when the countdown got close to zero and I initiated the exposures. I also had my compositions locked in and figured out hours before the launch so that there was little that could go wrong when the rocket launched. Additionally, I tested out the Pocket Wizard transceivers a few times to make sure they would fire all three cameras and not stop until the rocket left the frame of each camera's composition.

In addition to the three cameras I had set up on tripods, I also borrowed a fourth camera set up from Nikon Professional Services, which had an entire cache of gear onsite. For this fourth setup I got a Nikon Z8 and a Nikkor Z 100-400mm zoom lens. I set this camera up to fire off at 15 fps and with full autofocus tracking and laid it on my camera bag at my feet. The idea was that when the rocket left the launch pad and left the frame for all of the compositions I had set up with the tripod mounted cameras, I would then pick up the Z8 and the 100-400 and could continue photographing the rocket as it flew into the upper atmosphere above the press site as shown in the double page spread on pages 42-43.

The 100-400mm lens proved to be a versatile focal length for these grab and go images with the rocket far above us, but in hindsight, I would have also had a fifth camera with an 800mm lens on it as well to get a really tight shot of the solid rocket boosters (SRBs) coming off the rocket. I did manage to get an image of the SRBs falling away from the rocket but they were tiny in the frame. Once the rocket was well beyond our atmosphere, which only took eight minutes or so, there were plume formations in the sky making for wild abstract images. I keep on shooting well past the launch looking for shapes, colors

and anything that seemed interesting. Nearly an hour after the rocket launched the plume was still spinning around in the sky basking in the last light of the day and glowing bright orange and red against the deep blue sky (as shown on page 41).

At the very end of the day, the moon rose just above the low clouds on the eastern horizon and I happened to be in the parking lot putting away gear. There were several photographers that saw this and quickly pulled out a camera and lens to capture the moon rising. From my vantage point I also had the USA and NASA flags in the foreground as well. This seemed like a wild scenario to see the full moon rising on the horizon just after Artemis II launched and was soon to be heading towards the moon.

Of course, as an assignment photographer I am used to having a lot more access and creating a much wider variety of images. Hopefully at some point I will have more access and can get a wider variety of images for NASA, National Geographic, or some other major news outlets. This was only my second Artemis launch, and my second rocket launch of any kind, so I have learned a lot in just a few outings. There may not be another Artemis launch this close to sunset for quite some time so I was very happy to be there to document it this time around.

Now that I have photographed a night launch and a daytime launch I also have a pretty solid set of exposure guidelines for further launches. Compared to my normal assignments where I am often trying to capture incredibly fast action, photographing a rocket launch is relatively easy—it is just working with multiple cameras and remote cameras (in the future) that make it a bit technical







to capture a lot of different compositions and angles of the launch. The one thing I can certainly bring from my other Red Bull assignments is that you get one chance and it won't be happening again. Hence, having multiple cameras set up and all shooting at the same time is a critical backup in case one of them doesn't fire.

After the cameras were packed away, we started downloading images on our laptops and stayed at the Press Site knowing that traffic would be in a huge snarl for many hours to come. I left at around 11 PM thinking that surely most of the traffic would have cleared out. My hotel was in Orlando, about an hour away so I had a ways to go before I could get to sleep. Leaving five hours after the launch, I still ran into bumper to bumper traffic on the outskirts of Orlando. What is normally a fifty minute drive out to Kennedy Space Center took over two hours and I arrived back at the hotel at around 1:30 AM.

It was only in the following days that I realized what this launch meant to many of us around the world. As I wrote in my Spring 2026 Newsletter editorial entitled "A Glimmer of Hope":

In the days that followed after the launch, it became clear to me—and all of us for that matter—just what a big deal this was. In these dark days; with war fomenting in Iran, a President who has completely lost touch with reality, and the world changing at breakneck speed, it was soothing to see scientists, engineers, pilots and experts in their fields all come together for an ambitious mission to go to the Moon. Sure, we have been to the Moon before. We aren't necessarily breaking new ground here. But just as with the Apollo missions in the late 60s and early 70s, when humans dare to venture farther than they ever have before in such a grandiose manner,

that awakens something in all of us. For ten days as the four astronauts flew to the Moon and back, there was a glimmer of hope that humanity is not doomed. If we can go to the Moon, perhaps we can come together and solve our big problems like climate change, inequality, racism, greed, war and many others.

In addition to the glimmer of hope the Artemis II mission gave us all, they came back with some absolutely stunning images as well. I had a feeling that some of the images would become iconic but when those images from the far side of the Moon started streaming in we got a whole new perspective not only of the moon but also of our planet. Those images have already been used by scientists to [learn more](#) about our solar system. I would also say that still photography in general had a moment when these images created by the astronauts started streaming in. The astronauts captured video as well in some scenarios but it was the still images that really struck a chord with us Earthlings.

My thanks to NASA for the inspiration and the incredible mission to the moon and back—and for the media pass that allowed me to be there on site for the launch of Artemis II. I have high hopes that I will be able to go back and document the Artemis III and Artemis IV launches as well here in the next few years—and hopefully expand the coverage and access. With the explosion of the New Glenn rocket a few months ago we will see if NASA can hold to those timelines. To see all of the best images and time-lapse videos from this project visit my website and view the [Artemis II gallery](#). In that gallery are two timelapse videos built from my still images and many other images I did not have room to include here in this article.







portfolio





Blessed

by Michael Clark

When I get asked about my career, there is one work that comes to mind: Blessed. I have worked very hard for the last thirty years to make the most of my talents, and push my career as far as I can. But when it all boils down, I have had countless incredible experiences and opportunities that have created quite an interesting life. The definition of blessed is “enjoying divine favor, supreme happiness, or feeling exceptionally grateful for what you have in life.” Perhaps that divine favor are the gifts I was bestowed with when I was young, being able to draw things nearly photographically real from a very early age. Experience has taught me that talent alone doesn’t really do anything for you, hard work along with a bit of talent is what moves the needle. I am certainly grateful for the life I have created and which has been bestowed to me. And while on occasion I have had supreme happiness, I tend not to seek out happiness but cultivate contentment.

In my work, it is the rare day that I am out on an assignment and think to myself, “What am I doing here?” On many of my gigs, the subject and the work is quite interesting. Documenting humans pushing past fear, doubts and the laws of physics makes for fairly exciting subject matter. The people I am often working with, many of whom have become good friends, are also living a passionate life and pushing themselves and their sports as far as they can. Even while teaching photography

workshops, I am with passionate people who are trying to refine their craft—just as I do in my own work.

Notice I did not say here that this life has been easy. As with all of us, there are ups and downs—good times and bad times. In both the good times and bad times it really helps to hold room for some perspective. Earlier this year I had two of the most satisfying weeks of photography I have had in a long while, an assignment with Red Bull in Alaska (featured in the last issue of the Newsletter) and photographing the NASA Artemis II launch. In between those assignments I knew that two week period was going to be a highlight of the year and there would be some slower, less exciting times to follow. I have learned to enjoy those times when work is slow, and I have more time at home with family and friends. Even so, as a freelancer there is always a looming stress about when the next assignment will come.

The life of adventure that I have been able to pull off is what really continues to drive me. If someone had told me in my teens that I would later in life be photographing NASA rocket launches similar to the original Apollo program I would have thought they were nuts. But here we are in 2026, and with this issue of the Newsletter you are seeing that reality. I am truly blessed. A huge thanks to my family, friends and all of my clients who have helped make this blessed reality possible.



The plume left behind after the NASA Artemis II launch in Cape Canaveral, Florida at Kennedy Space Center on April 1, 2026.

ADVERTISEMENT

Fine Art Prints. Images to Live With.

All of my images are available as fine art prints. Each image is printed on archival papers and using archival processes to insure image quality and color fidelity. Please contact me if you are interested in purchasing a print. All of my images are also available as spectacular Metal Prints.



Make Your Walls Come Alive.

PRICING AVAILABLE AT WWW.MICHAELCLARKPHOTO.COM