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**WINTER 2017** 

### <u>contents</u>



WINTER 2017 NEWSLETTER

### **4** editorial

Back in Action. An introduction to this issue of the Newsletter along with a list of recent clients.

### 6 news

Recent news including an interview with the Visual Revolutionary Podcast and a *Year in Review* blog post detailing my best images of 2016.

### 10 workshops

Detailed information on upcoming photography workshops I'll be teaching in the Annapurna region of the Himalayas, Glacier National Park in Montana and the Lofoten Islands of Norway.

### **14** equipment review

A review of Sekonic's LiteMaster Pro L-478DR light meter that has a built-in transmitter for various strobe transceivers including Elinchrom, PocketWizard and Phottix.

### **20** on assignment

A recent assignment for Sekonic, who manufactures photographic light meters, where I worked with a group of boxers at a local gym here in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

### 26 portfolio

A cloudy arctic summer morning in Trollsfjord in the Lofoten Islands in northern Norway. This image was created while leading a Sailing expedition with Vertical Shot Expeditions, which is happening again in 2017.

### 28 perspective

G.A.S. An editorial on the widespread plague of "Gear Acquisition Syndrome" that seems to be rampant among photographers, including myself on occasion.

### **29** parting shot

Jonny Durand hanggliding above a Texas landscape and creating a Brocken Specter on a cloud below him, while going for the hanggliding distance world record.

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Cover Image: Katie Mast and David Truncellito night hiking for turns above Francie's Cabin near Breckenridge, Colorado. Opposite Page: Francie's Cabin, part of the Summit Huts backcountry cabins in central Colorado, lit up under a night sky near Breckenridge.



### **editorial**



### **Back in Action**

Back on my feet with three assignments already under my belt

A fter being on the couch for six weeks, due to a surgery on my ankle in late November, I was pretty excited to be able to walk again—and get back on the move in late January. The ankle is still healing up but it is 95% back in action and I have already shot three assignments in the last few weeks. As you might imagine, I am not one to sit around, and I am keen to get back into action—and go skiing!

2017 is ramping up to be a stellar year already. There are quite a few adventures already on the calendar and I am really excited about all of them. The workshops I have going with Vertical Shot Expeditions alone, as listed in the Workshops section on page 8, are pretty incredible. I can't wait to share with you the new images from my upcoming assignments—and those images I have just shot in the last few weeks.

Here in this issue of the Newsletter, I am highlighting an assignment with Sekonic from last fall, where I did a studio shoot (Yes, you read that right, a studio shoot) with some local kick-ass boxers. You can find that behind the scenes article starting on page 16. Also, I have included a review of the Sekonic L-478DR light meter, starting on page 12, which was used for the boxing shoot—and indeed was the entire reason for that assignment. While I was on the couch, I got an email from Ric and Kevin of the Visual Revolutionary podcast asking if I would like to be interviewed for an episode of their podcast. I had recently been listening to a few of their podcasts, which go in-depth and tell the story of how a photographer started out and got to where they are today. Hence, when I got their email, it seemed like serendipity. It was a blast to have a long format conversation with them and I highly recommend that you check out their podcast. They have interviewed some amazing photographers and it was truly an honor for me to be a part of what they are doing. Links to the podcast are on page 6.

As usual, this Newsletter is packed with my latest images, a ton of information and updates on my world. I hope you enjoy it and thank you for taking the time to check out this issue of the Newsletter.

*Opposite Page: A double exposure portrait of Marc Romanelli, who is a preeminent stock photographer, a dear friend and a long-time mentor.* 

**Recent Clients:** Apple, New Balance, Red Bull, Red Bulletin, Cordura, Swarovski, Sekonic, Mac Group US, Men's Health magazine, Dorado Magazine, B&H Photo & Video and FMS Global Media.



#### news

### **Visual Revolutionary Podcast**

An in-depth interview detailing my career and trajectory as an adventure photographer



ast month I had the honor of speaking with the <u>Visual Revolutionary</u> Podcast, hosted and created by Ric Stovall and Kevin Banker. Ric and Kevin are laid back, easy going guys, with a penchant for exploring how topend photographers have gotten to where they are today. If you have not heard about this podcast I can't recommend it highly enough. Ric and Kevin have interviewed a lot of photographers in the last two years, and specifically quite a few photographers in the outdoor adventure genre, including many of my peers: Tim Kemple, Keith Ladzinski, Corey Rich, Chris Burkard, Cory Richards and Tyler Stableford. They have also interviewed luminaries such as Dave Black, Ami Vitale, David Alan Harvey and Rich Clarkson.

Their focus is not on gear, but on the journey each photographer has taken to get where they are currently in their careers. As it says on their website: "Because we are interested in people's story and not what type of gear they use, we introduce a new, much needed podcast in the world of photography and cinematography. Featuring in-depth conversations with some of the world's leading photographers, filmmakers, and other visual revolutionaries, we are bringing you the backstory on how some of your favorite artists got to where they are today."

Bravo Ric and Kevin! This is a much needed style of podcast. Whenever I meet a photographer that inspires me, the burning question I always want to ask is "Tell me your story. How did you get started?" I think that in telling that story, those who are starting out, or even the seasoned pro, can learn a lot about the process, the journey and what it takes to get established. You can find my conversation with Ric and Kevin on <u>iTunes</u> or on the Visual Revolutionary <u>website</u>. I hope you enjoy the conversation and find time to listen to some of their other excellent interviews. My thanks to Ric and Kevin for reaching out and asking me to be a part of their podcast series. This is definitely one of the best podcasts I have been a part of in a long, long time.

### 2016: Year in Review

A blog post summing up the best images from the last year



At the end of last year, I published a blog post entitled, "2016: Year in Review," which highlights my best images of 2016. It was an incredible year with some of the most adventurous travels I have had in a number of years. 2017 is looking pretty adventurous as well. 2016 also marked a year where one of my images was recognized by Communication Arts (CA) in their Photo Annual. That was a huge award for me as I have been trying to get an image in the CA Photo Annual pretty much my entire career. I know that these "Year in Review" blog posts are a dime a dozen, but I hope you find this blog post at least entertaining. If you have been following along this year then you have seen most of the images included in this blog post already but there are a few new images that haven't been distributed far and wide just yet. The above image of Shiprock is one of my favorites from 2016, but as usual, it is very hard to pick out your best images. Happy New Year to all of my readers. Here's to an adventurous 2017!

### workshops

### **Photography Workshops**

An overview of workshops and photo treks with Michael Clark

**E** ach year I teach a few 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 2017. For more information on these workshops, and to find out how to register, go to the <u>Workshops</u> page on my blog.

#### Photographing Annapurna's Secret Landscapes

Himalayas, Nepal - April 3 - 18, 2017

The mighty Himalayas: home to the world's highest mountains, sacred Buddhist monasteries and the few tribes accustomed to living permanently in the thin air. On this photography expedition, we will venture deep into the lands of the snow leopard while trekking from one stone-house village to another. This is not a standard Annapurna Circuit trek. After a month-long scouting expedition in 2015, we noted many side-trails and places to stay that most trekkers never get to visit.

Led by adventure photographers Vlad Donkov and Michael Clark, together with one of the best Nepali guides around and a team of porters, you will have the chance to photograph some of the most interesting locations north of Annapurna and improve your photography over the course of a fortnight of shooting. The expedition is designed in a way that lets you acclimatize gradually. At the highest point of the expedition, we will stand at an altitude of about 4,800m (15,750ft). During the first two days of the trek, we will save a lot of time by using 4×4 vehicles to cover the first part of the Annapurna Circuit trail, which is already connected by a dirt road and is frequented by trekkers. We will also use jeeps for one more day on the way down: this strategy will let us spend the majority of our time photographing in the high-alpine areas above the regular trail. For the remaining ten days in the mountains, we will be trekking with light camera backpacks for four to seven hours a day. We will stay in six teahouses (and a monastery) and two hotels over the course of fifteen nights.

For a detailed itinerary and much more information on this exciting workshop visit the <u>Vertical Shot Expedition</u> <u>website</u>.

#### Workshop fee: \$4,950

Please Note that this expedition is being run by Vertical Shot Expeditions, which is a European company so all payments will be made via wired transfers to Europe.

#### Mentor Series Photo Trek - Montana

Glacier National Park, July 5 - 9, 2017

The Mentor Series is headed back to Montana, one of our



The mighty Himalayas and remote, less well known villages and valleys on the Annapurna circuit make up the itinerary for this exciting photography workshop with Vertical Shot Expeditions in April 2017. For more information read the description on the previous page and follow links to the VSE website. Photo by Vlad Donkov.

favorite destinations. Montana never disappoints, especially when the focus is on magnificent Glacier National Park along with events highlighting Native American culture. Join Mentor Series and Nikon professional photographers David Tejada and Michael Clark as we explore the many ways of capturing dramatic landscapes, along with tips and techniques for shooting action, animals and people.

Sunset along the shores of Lake McDonald will be our first stop on capturing the beauty of the park. We'll explore the majestic views along the iconic Going-to-the-Sun Road, characterized by waterfalls, jagged peaks, and valleys bursting with wildflowers. Glacier is noted for its historic and colossal hotels, including Glacier Park Lodge. Our visit here will also provide photos ops of the well maintained flower gardens that lead up to the hotel, along with time to focus on the lofty interiors sporting massive Douglas fir pillars.

Glacier Hotel in the northeast corner of the park is our launching point for boat rides across Swiftcurrent and Josephine Lakes to the trailhead of Grinnell Glacier. It's a healthy hike up the trail for sweeping overviews of Grinnell Lake, or opt for an easy walk to the lakeshore. Our accommodations for this trek are at the doorstep of the very colorful North American Indian Days Powwow in Browning. We'll devote a day to capturing all the pageantry of this annual celebration, which includes an array of dancing, drumming, and stick games. Adjacent to the powwow grounds is the All Indian rodeo. Its nonstop photos ops – cowboys, bucking horses, Indian relays and racing. Working alongside David and Michael you'll experiment with a variety of ways to capture the action at both events, from slow shutter speeds for dreamy movement to higher settings for tack sharp results.

Cost: \$1,625 includes National Park fees & permits, transportation to all shooting locations, daily lecture series, presentations and digital group review sessions.

For more information and to register for this workshop visit the <u>Mentor Series website</u>.

#### Sailing in the Lofoten Islands

Lofoten Islands, Norway, August 25 - September 1, 2017

Now in its fifth 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 beautiful mountainous islands. Between us, the team members here at Vertical Shot Expeditions have undertaken more than twenty journeys to Lofoten during the past decade – so we can certainly say that this stunning mountainous archipelago, with its islands rising straight from the sea, is our second home.

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 led by the legendary American outdoor photographer Michael Clark. The adventure starts in Svolvaer, 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. Whilst this is an expedition designed for photographers (rather than a photography workshop), you will still get loads of hands-on one-to-one instruction in the field.

Sailing presents us with plenty of opportunities to take photographs from unusual viewpoints and to reach wild 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 pristine beaches and explore our surroundings on foot. There will be a good chance that we will be able to observe whales and orca as well as dolphins and seals. On our previous sailing expeditions in Lofoten at this time of the year, we have experienced magical displays of Aurora Borealis lasting for hours.

Workshop fee: \$3,570 per person plus Boat Bank of \$320/person. Please Note that this expedition is being run by Vertical Shot Expeditions, which is a European company so payments will be sent to Europe.

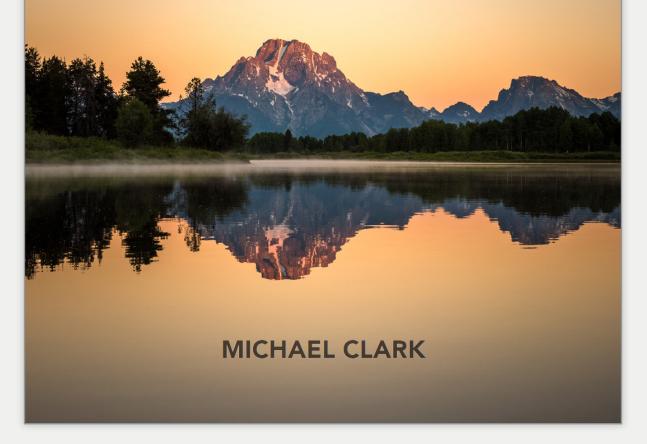
For more information on this exciting workshop visit the <u>Vertical Shot Expeditions website</u>.

For more information on my upcoming workshops, or to read more testimonials, please visit the <u>Workshops</u> page on my blog. Hope to see you at a workshop here soon!

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### equipment review

### Sekonic LiteMaster Pro L-478DR

A review of Sekonic's feature packed, touchscreen light meter

**Disclaimer:** I received this Sekonic light meter as part of a sponsorship with MacGroup US, which is the USA distributor for Sekonic light meters. I did not pay for the light meter but

was given the product as part of my sponsorship. Regardless of my sponsorship, I was not paid to create this review of the Sekonic L-478DR light meter.

he Sekonic LiteMaster Pro L-478DR light meter has been out for a few years now, but in the last year it was updated with new transmitter modules so that it now works with not only PocketWizard transceivers but also with Elinchrom Skyport transceivers and the Phottix Strato transmitters. As an Elinchrom user this is an exciting development that makes setting up a strobe image much easier. With this new version of the L-478DR, named the Sekonic L-478DR-U-EL, I can trigger my Elinchrom strobes directly with the light meter to take a reading and do a whole lot more. This light meter is



many of which I have never seen in any light meter. Regardless of the advanced features, it is very simple to use and is also compact and lightweight so it can easily be

packed along with my lighting gear.

I always use a light meter when I work with strobes. I don't get why you would not use a light meter. They aren't that expensive when compared to camera and lighting equipment. And with a light meter right off the bat you get a perfect exposure with no guess work. Of course, the light meter reading is only a starting point depending on the look you are going for. But, when I am on a set with an art director, athletes and other crew. and sometimes the client themselves, the last thing I want to do is have to take five to ten shots where I am guessing at the exposure to figure out my camera and strobe settings. I look a lot more professional using a light meter and nailing it on the first shot is just a hell of a lot easier than

the first to feature a touch screen on the front of the meter and it also includes some very advanced features, guessing. Plus using a light meter allows me to dial in the lighting to the aperture setting that I want to use straight



The above screenshot shows the four different models of the Sekonic LiteMaster Pro L-478DR light meter that are available, which are the standard version without any radio transmitter, a PocketWizard version, an Elinchrom version and finally a Phottix version.

away without any guess work. For any serious photographer, who works with flash or strobes, I'd say a light meter is a key piece of equipment if you want to do serious lighting.

For nearly 20 years I had an ancient Minolta IV-F light meter that I used, and it has long needed to be upgraded. Early last year, I got the Sekonic L-478DR, via Mac Group, and it is so much more advanced—and much more accurate—than the old Minolta ever was.

The Sekonic L-478DR-U-EL (that is a mouth full) is an incredibly powerful light meter. In the standard mode it is very easy to use. You simply touch the screen and power

your lights up or down and then push the button on the right side to of the meter to take a reading. On all of the Elinchrom strobes, it is possible, and fairly easy, to put each of them into individual radio frequency groups. The light meter can handle up to four groups. With the strobes set up this way, you can touch the screen and adjust the power setting of each group individually. Also, the light meter will show you the exact f-stop reading for each group so you can build your lighting set up quickly and efficiently—all the while knowing the exact lighting ratios between all of the groups. This makes it very simple to quickly set up a precise lighting scenario.

The L-478DR also has the ability to be customized for up



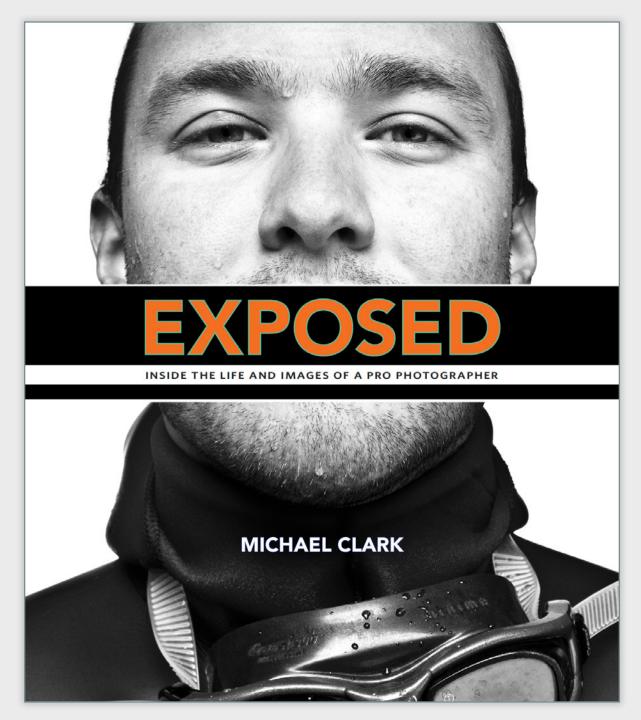
In the above screenshot, I am adjusting the power out put of my Elinchrom ELC Pro HD strobe using the Sekonic L-478DR-U-EL light meter. This is a screenshot from the behind the scenes video produced for Sekonic where I photographed boxers as discussed in the feature article that starts on Page 16.

to ten camera and lens combinations. How much light gets to your sensor varies with each camera and lens combination. Part of this is just how accurate the ISO ratings on your digital camera are and part of it is the number of lens elements in each lens. Because of these variables, getting an accurate meter reading with digital can be tricky. Out of the box, I found the L-478DR to be very close. But by photographing an X-Rite Color Checker chart and using the Sekonic Data Transfer software I was able to dial in the accuracy on a level I have never seen before. In addition, once you have dialed in the custom settings for your camera, the light meter can also tell you if your exposure and lighting is within the dynamic range of your camera. There are so many advanced functions on this light meter that there isn't room to cover them all here. Go to the Sekonic website, linked to at the end of this article, for a link to the dedicated L-478DR website.

Aside from still photography, the L-478DR also has settings to work with video. You can set the frame rate, shutter speed and get very accurate meter readings for motion capture. It can of course also measure ambient light if you want to use it for available light photography situations. Sadly, it does not have a color meter to measure white balance, which would be very handy, but Sekonic makes color meters as well if you need one of those.

My thanks to Sekonic for this light meter. It is great to finally have a light meter that can trigger my Elinchrom strobes without playing any games. For more info on the L-478DR, check out the Sekonic website dedicated to that light meter at <u>http://www.sekonic.com/I-478/</u>. To see how I used this light meter in a recent shoot check out the <u>Sekonic behind the scenes video</u> from my recent boxing photo shoot. ADVERTISEMENT

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# on assignments SEKONIC®

## A STUDIO ASSIGNMENT FOR SEKONIC WITH BOXER'S FROM UNDISPUTED FITNESS

NEWSLETTER 16 WINTER 2017

An in-camera, multi-expsoure image of Luis F. Castillo shadow boxing on set at Undisputed Fitness in Santa Fe, New Mexico



A the end of the summer last year, I shot an assignment for <u>Sekonic</u> light meters to show how the <u>Sekonic L-478DR-U-EL</u> light meter works seamlessly with Elinchrom strobes. For this assignment, we chose a studio setting and I worked with a trio of boxers from <u>Undisputed Fitness</u> here in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The boxers, Nate Harris, Luis F. Castillo (pictured on the previous page) and Reuben Rivera, were wicked fit and great to work with on this shoot. As you can see in the images included here, we shot some "standard" type portraits and then really got creative with in-camera multiple exposure images. But since the whole point of this shoot was to highlight the Sekonic light meter we were also filming a behind the scenes video to go along with the images.

As you can see in the image on page 20, I had three Elinchrom strobes set up in three groups. I also dialed in the back lights so that they had the same power output. In this example, the rim lights (Back lights) were approximately a half-stop brighter than the front fill light.

This was a pretty standard three light setup with two edge lights in the back separating the boxer from the black background and a large octagonal softbox filling in from camera right in front of the subject. For the background lights, I used one <u>Elinchrom Indirect Litemotiv</u> <u>Recta</u> on one side and a 30-degree grid spot on the other side. The big softbox in front was an <u>Elinchrom 120cm</u> <u>Litemotiv</u>, which is a gorgeous light modifier. For strobes, I used a couple of the <u>Elinchrom ELC Pro HD</u> strobes along with an <u>Elinchrom ELB400</u>. All of this was triggered with the <u>Elinchrom Skyport Plus HS transmitter</u>. The reason I am going into such great detail here is to show that the Sekonic light meter talks to both the strobes (all Elinchrom flavors) and also to the Skyport transmitter so that all of them are on the same page. I can take readings with the light meter, change the power settings on any or all of my strobes, and the strobes and the Skyport will talk to each other and adjust the power settings in sync so that everything is on the same page. This makes it very easy to dial in the lighting for each scenario.

Once we got everything set up and dialed in, we concentrated on the images. Initially, I focused on portraits like the one shown on the opposite page of Reuben Rivera, and shot those with the Hasselblad H5D 50c WiFi. I did shoot some action with the Hasselblad as well, like the bottom image on the opposite page, but then switched to the Nikon D810 when the action started heating up—and for the multiple exposure capabilities built into that camera.

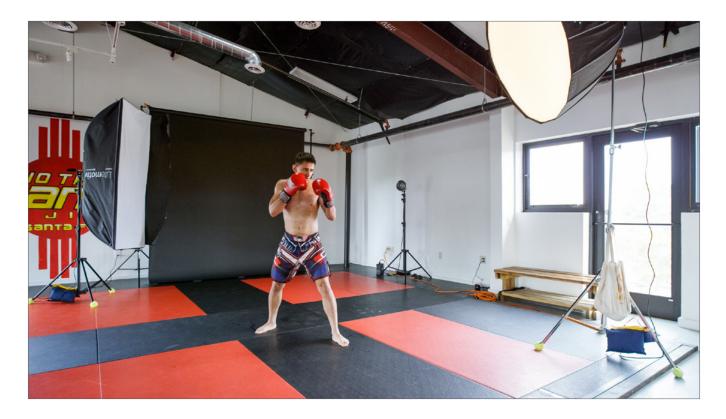
Before the shoot, I came up with the concept of doing a series of multiple exposure images and then piecing the various multi-exposure images together in Photoshop. Once we got rolling on that series of images, we really started to hit the mark. The boxers seemed pretty stoked on the images and I worked with each of them to create a variety of multiple exposure images. I also have to say the in-camera multiple exposure mode of the Nikon D810 (and it is the same on most pro Nikons) is pretty incredible. There was very little post-production done on these images. I only did a little tone mapping and darkened the black background slightly to get the images you see here.

To make the boxers seem like they had been working out for a long time, we sprayed them down with oil and water. The shoot itself lasted about two hours and by the end of it they were working up a sweat. I wanted to have flying



Above: A portrait of Reuben Rivera at Undisputed Fitness in Santa Fe, New Mexico captured using a Hasselblad H5D 50c WiFi 50 MP digital medium format camera and using Elinchrom strobes. Right: An image of Luis F. Castillo shadow boxing at Undisputed Fitness in Santa Fe, New Mexico created using the same set as shown with the portrait above.





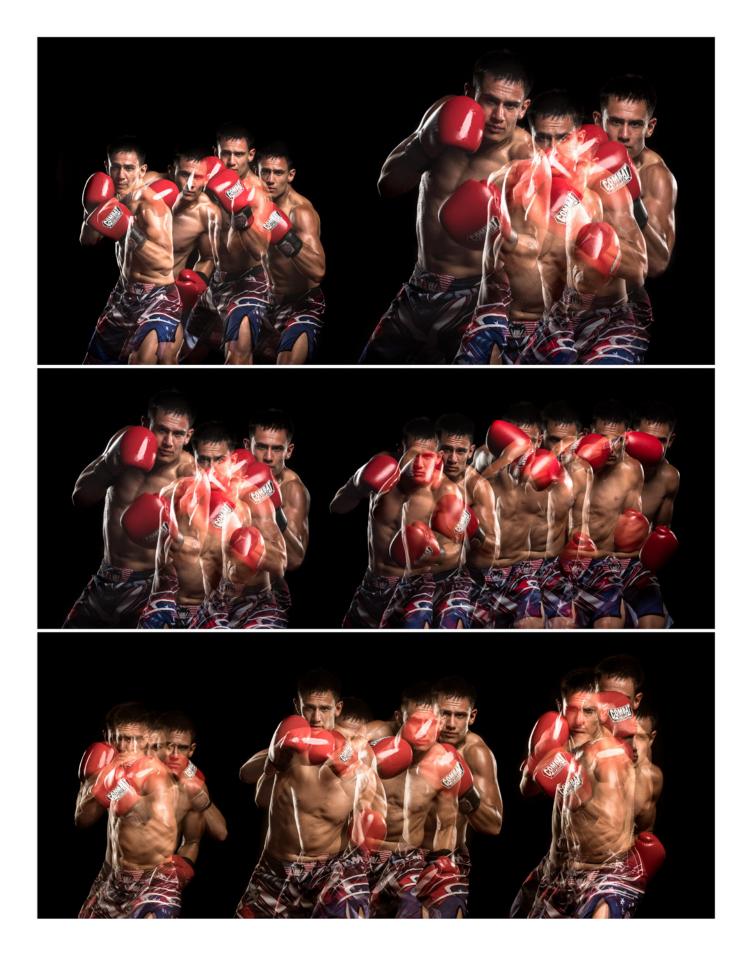
Above: A behind the scenes shot showing the background and lighting setup at the Undisputed Fitness gym in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Note, I put tennis balls on the light stands so we would not leave any marks on the pads. This was a pretty standard three light setup against a black background that creates fairly dramatic lighting. Opposite page: Three different multi-exposure images of Luis F. Castillo shadow boxing at Undisputed Fitness in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The in-camera multiple exposure was possible because it is a feature included in the Nikon D810. To create these panoramas, I composited various multiple exposure sequences together in Photoshop.

water drops coming off them as they punched the air. In the end, the water drops flying off them are hard to see in most of the images but a few do show some serious water spray.

I am not sure myself which of the many multiple exposure composites, shown on the opposite page, from this shoot are my favorite. I have to say that all of them look pretty cool. I was trying to convey the bobbing and punching movement of a boxer in a still image with the multiple exposure technique. If I had to pick one, I think top composite shown on the next page is my favorite.

In the end, we got some great images and we really

showed just how powerful it is to have a stellar light meter to work with. If you use Elinchrom strobes and are looking for the best possible light meter to use with your strobes, look no further. The Sekonic L-478DR-U-EL is an amazing light meter with a very deep set of advanced functions and a super cool touchscreen. My thanks to Sekonic and Mac Group (the USA distributor for Sekonic and Elinchrom) for this assignment. Also, my thanks to <u>Bill Stengel</u> for the behind the scenes video footage and of course to Nate, Luis, and Reuben for working so hard to help us create these images. You can check out the behind the scenes video on <u>Sekonic's YouTube Channel</u>. For a wider selection of images from this assignment, please visit my website to view a <u>hidden web gallery</u>.



### portfolio

1



### perspective

• his *Perspective* article is always the hardest piece in the Newsletter to write. I try to write something that is timely, but I also try to do so in a way that doesn't sound like I am preaching. I say that because the title of this piece is G.A.S., which might be misconstrued as "hot air." G.A.S. is an acronym that means "Gear Acquisition Syndrome." There are many sports and activities where this syndrome can be found but digital photographers are particularly susceptible to this problem. I admit. I am a gear head. I love talking about the specs of cameras and lighting gear, even if they are not even available yet to the public. As you might have noticed, this Newsletter, as with this issue, can sometimes get a bit gear heavy. But, regardless of the geeking out here on the subject of gear, if you go to the Equipment List on my blog you will notice that I only own one camera that is the most recently released version of that system, the Nikon D810.

I did not upgrade to the Nikon D5 and still use the older Hasselblad H5D 50c, which has the exact same sensor found in the new H6D. Sure, I am still drooling over the Hasselblad X1D, but it doesn't do anything Earth-shattering that my H5D can't do and it has the exact same sensor. As a working pro, I do keep abreast of what is coming out and how it might help me get an edge, but the reality these days is that all digital cameras from the last three or four years are quite mature. This might be an issue for **G.A.S.** by Michael Clark

Nikon or Canon in terms of selling new cameras, and the entire camera market is massively shrinking each year in terms of sales, but for photographers the limiting factor is imagination, creativity and just getting out there and working hard to create new images.

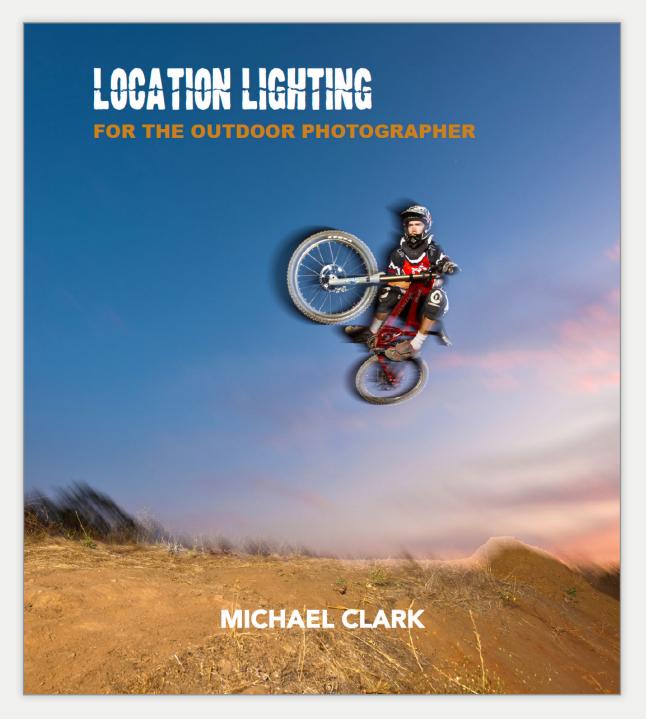
The best business advice I ever got, which I have quoted often, was from Marc Romanelli. He said, "Keep your overhead as low as possible." That makes good business sense. Of course, I bought Hasselblad kit, so I kind of threw that one out the window, but that was an investment in my craft to some degree. Time will tell if it was a good investment or not. My point is, more gear doesn't equal better images. It just means you have more gear to schlep around. I have bought a lot of gear over the last ten years, and a lot of it didn't change my world like I thought it would so I sold it a few years later, or in some cases a few months later. The point of this piece is get over the gear. Concentrate on the images and put a lot of thought into what you want to create and what you want your images to look like—and you will become a massively better photographer. Simplify the gear and concentrate on the image. Avoid G.A.S. Remember this, all of the most iconic images from history were created with less advanced cameras and gear than most of us currently own. Good photography has more to do with what is behind the camera than the camera itself.

### parting shot



Jonny Durand hanggliding above the Texas landscape while going for the distance world record starting from Zapata, Texas on June 23, 2016. While photographing him from an ultralight aircraft I noticed a Brocken specter appeared just below him, which is visible in the lower right corner of this image.

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