

Exposed

JRC fotocineclub's journal
Vol. 3, February 2020

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Editorial

Dear readers

I always enjoy looking at all your beautiful photos. And there has been surely a development from happy snaps to more elaborate work over time. But what I often find disappointing is, that despite having a good idea, the execution lacks care. As a viewer of someone else's photos, there is no personal emotion involved. And the first thing I do is to look at the composition, for example where my eye is taken first and where it wanders then. A photo in which I get drawn first to some bright garbage in the corner, does not work, whatever the idea. Please take a look at the images by Cartier-Bresson (or other great photographers). Yes, he captures the critical moment, of which one can be proud, but more than that he always maintains a clean overall composition.

We really enjoy preparing the FCC journal EXPOSED for you.

Please keep submitting your interesting articles and stunning photos. But please let us also know what you would like to read about and what you think about our journal or single articles.

The photoclub really depends on your active collaboration.

Rudolf

workshop

announcement:
street
photography
with Ricardo Silva in Lisbon

spring/summer 2020
please check FCC website

reportage

street photography with Simon Beni in Jerusalem

Last year in December, Ralf and I joined Simon Beni, a professional photographer and tour guide located in Israel, on a private tour through the quarters of the old city of Jerusalem.

The day started rather early at 08:00 and this way we got a feeling of the streets with only few local people and practically no tourists, which is an advantage, as the place can be quite busy and confusing during the day. Spending some time in the almost empty shop alleys, he first explained his technique for street photography: Setting up the camera with Auto ISO (within a certain range of course), a fixed shutter speed of 1/125 or 1/250 and an aperture of 9 or 11 for sufficiently sharp images.



The old city of Jerusalem is a Mecca for photographers and really has a lot to offer such as churches, synagogues, the Western Wall, mosques, markets, shops, and restaurants. It has only less than one square kilometre but probably has more religious sites in the world per square meter than anywhere else in the world. Above all, albeit all significant historic sites,

I found the people most fascinating. Walk on almost any street in Jerusalem and you will find an eye-popping variety of fascinating people of all ages and religions. Along the streets of the Muslim and Christian quarters you will see locals at work in their shops, pilgrims carrying crosses along the Via Dolorosa route, Hasidic religious Jews passing by on bikes ...







Simon, being a regular tour guide in Jerusalem, practically knows everyone. Wherever we went, we crossed people he chatted with. He pushed us to approach shop owners or also monks asking for their permission to be photographed with a smile and the magical word 'Mumkin' meaning 'can I' or 'do I have the permission'. People generally did not object

to being photographed, however, I am quite sure that we could not have taken pictures of some people without his help. All in all the day was a very positive experience. Jerusalem is a fantastic and most interesting place for street photography. Simon is a great photographer and knowledgeable tour guide at the same time, who has a lot to tell about Jerusalem's history but

also about politics and problems resulting of the specific situation of the city. I only wished I could have experienced the city for some time before the course as I was so totally overwhelmed by its different impressions.

Gabi



behind the story

ETM Faces of Africa

It is now 15 years that my work at the JRC brings me regularly to Africa. Beyond conferences and meetings, I am often also in the field, which allows me to discover this magnificent continent not only from space (I work with Earth observation satellite images), but also with my camera on the ground.

So far, my Africa images have been frequently used for presentations

or printed in scientific journals and policy reports. However, in the back of my mind I always wanted to do more with the hundreds of images taken all over the continent. The opportunity came up while talking to my colleague and friend Mauro during one of our lunch runs.

Mauro is part of ETM (Europa Terzo Mondo), an “independent NGO,

originally founded in 1968 in Brussels by a few EC staff members, with the aim of responding in a practical way to needs of people in developing countries”.

In early 2019 we discussed about the possibility to organize a charity event for a dedicated ETM micro project by exhibiting and selling a selection of my Africa images.

Location and date were

easily defined, JRC cafeteria from 11-22 November 2019 with a special apericena and music event on the last day of the exhibition. This was the easy part of the project. For those having arranged already a photo exhibition know what I’m talking about. Taking pictures and processing them is only the beginning, organizing an exhibition even more when linked to a charity event requires team work. Luckily ETM is a well tuned “machine”, having many years of experience in running such charity events. And from my side I’m fortunate in having



Water for life. Access to drinking water through a household connection is as low as 20% in sub-Saharan Africa. It is mostly women and girls who have the burden to collect water from often far distant wells. Location: northern Benin, 2011

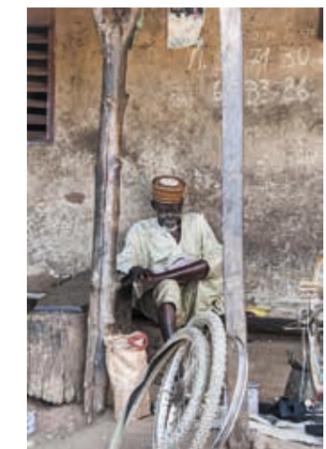
my very personal “photo manager”, my wife Åse, who is an excellent coordinator.

And finally, my friend Lorenzo is not only the best poster designer, but has also a critical eye in selecting the most

appropriate images. We selected 13 image pairs (limited by the space in the cafeteria), associated by a portrait or group of people and their landscape. Each pair was telling a particular story.



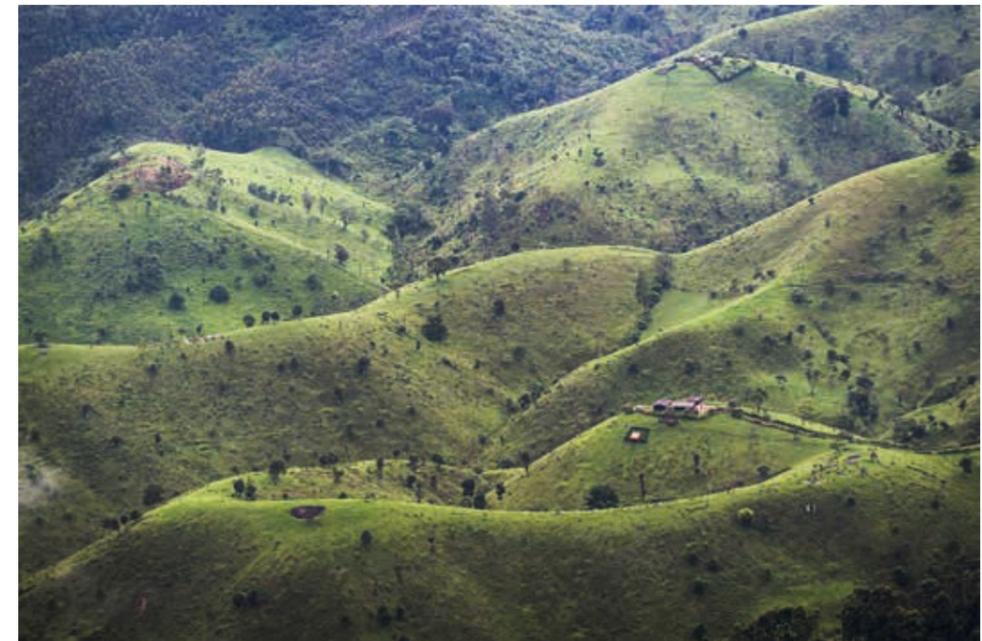
The amphitheatre. First snow on the Drakensberg. This mountain range is not only a major tourist attraction, but is also part of the main catchment that supplies water to large parts of southern Africa including Swaziland, Mozambique, and Namibia. Location: Drakensberg, South Africa, 2017



Faces of Africa. It’s the people that make this continent so unique, beautiful and diverse.



The lungs of the Earth. Breath-taking aerial view over the endless tropical forest in the heart of Africa. It almost looks like the forest is breathing.
Location: East Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo, 2017



Dream landscape. Aerial view of beautiful and fertile rolling hills in East Kivu. People say that you can just throw any seed on the ground and it will grow.
Location: East Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo, 2017



Nyiragongo crater. One of the largest active lava lakes in the world. After the gorillas, main tourist attraction of the Virunga National Park, but also ticking time bomb. The last major eruption in 2002 destroyed about 15% of the provincial capital Goma and caused an evacuation of 400,000 people.
Location: Nyiragongo crater, Democratic Republic of Congo, 2017



Patchwork. Most of the Virunga National Park is surrounded by intensive cropland. Agriculture provides sustainable income to local communities; however it is also competing for land with the park.
Location: Virunga, Democratic Republic of Congo, 2017

Feedback to the pictures displayed in the cafeteria was very good, also the exhibition poster created great attention and discussion.

The charity event on the 22nd November was a great success, bringing together images, live music from DR Congo (guitar and percussion), the micro project of the "associazione Nonnolino" supporting a carpentry project in Kenya and of course a nice "apericena". All in all, about double of the pictures exposed have been sold in support of the carpentry project in Kenya.



Biodiversity. Agriculture and charcoal production are among the main causes of deforestation in most areas in Africa. This causes threat to biodiversity and pressure on the environment. Location: eastern Tanzania, 2011

Together with the income generated by the apericena the support to the carpentry project was substantial.

Selling an image gives always a great feeling of

satisfaction, but selling an image of which all proceeds are in support of people who are less fortunate than we are is something even more gratifying.

Andreas

all photos © Andreas Brink



The long ride. These two firewood and charcoal sellers have to cycle for many kilometres every day to reach their final destination in Dar Es Salam. Firewood is an essential raw material for the everyday cooking for about 80% of the population in Africa. Location: outskirts of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 2011

ETM
Sustainable Tanzania
Italy

COMITATO JRC
CULTURALE
ISPRVA

Buy a photo
all proceeds go to the ETM carpentry project in Kenya

Andreas Brink for ETM

FACES OF AFRICA
Impressions of People and Landscapes

JRC cafeteria
11 till 22 November

**APERICENA
& music!**

JRC Caffeteria - external access, open to public
APERICENA (offer from 15 €) / Via Enrico Fermi, 2749, Ispra VA

21 November from 19:00 till 23:00

travel

pyramid of Kukulcan

Ever since I was very young, I had always wanted to visit the pyramid of Kukulcan, located in the archaeological zone of Chichen Itza. Chichen Itza is an ancient Mayan city in ruins, located about 120 km from the city of Merida, the capital of the state of Yucatan, in Mexico. The name Chichen Itza comes from the Mayan words chi “mouth” and che’en “well”, and literally means “In the mouth of the well of Itza.”

The Itza, a Maya ethnic group that had a predominant political and economic position in that part of the Yucatan, settled there more than a thousand years ago taking advantage of two large natural water tanks (Cenotes), resulting from the collapse of limestone bedrock that exposes groundwater underneath, the only source of water in that arid zone. The Maya built the pyramid between the ninth and twelfth centuries and

it served as a temple dedicated to the god Kukulcan who protected the divinity of priests, according to Maya mythology, a cult closely bound to the god Quetzalcoatl known to the Aztecs and other Mesoamerican cultures. In the Mayan language Kukulcan or Kukulcan is composed of: kuk “pen” with an adjective suffix-ul, and can, “snake”, therefore literally means “feathered serpent”.



Two sculptures in the shape of feathered serpent heads that adorn the base of the main staircase seem to extend up to the flank

of the stairs in the form of railing. During the spring and autumn equinoxes, the afternoon sun that reaches that corner of the

pyramid casts a series of triangular shadows against that balustrade, creating the illusion of a snake that creeps down slowly.





We entered the archaeological site from one of the back entrances. We walked along paths full of vegetation, sculptures and very well arranged gardens. Unfortunately, in order to preserve the pyramid and reduce the risk of accidents, it is currently not allowed to climb to the top of the pyramid. It was a disappointment since we could not appreciate the landscape from above, nor could we visit the interior of the temple. At dusk, we attended the show "Nights of Kukulcan". During the tour you can see some of the

main monuments in the surroundings of the Pyramid of Kukulcan. Among others, the wall where the ball game was practiced and the temple of the warriors with the vestige of dozens of columns. Colours of different shades illuminate the monuments while visitors receive an explanation of each of them through a recording. Finally, a projection on the walls of the pyramid with fascinating combinations of multi-coloured designs and music brought us closer to the ancient Mayan culture. The night show was very

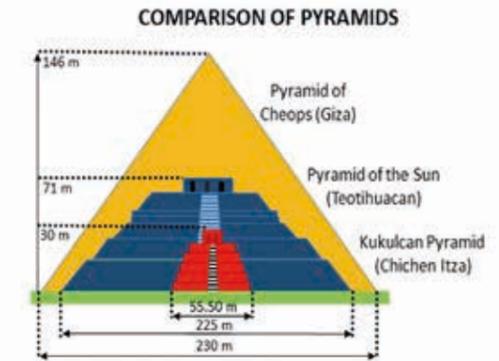
nice, however, the best time to appreciate the pyramid of Kukulcan is during the day. Standing in front of the pyramid on a sunny day like the one we had is essential to appreciate the magnificence of our ancestors. The sight of the imposing pyramid of Kukulcan through the tropical vegetation gave me goose bumps. It was amazing to be in front of this wonderful work of art ... Simply amazing!

Emilio

photos © Emilio Mendoza

Technical details

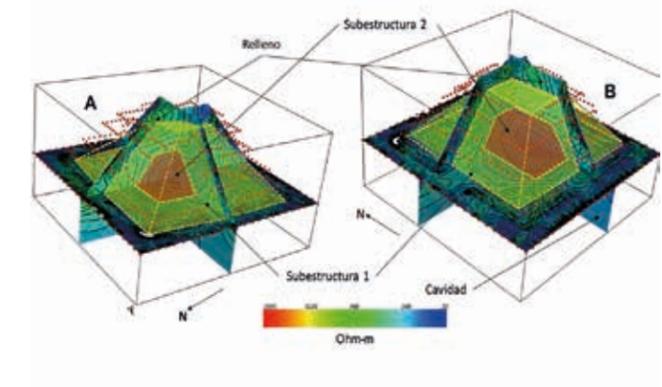
The pyramid of Kukulcan is 24 m high, and an additional 6 m of the temple, make a total of 30 meters high, very low with respect to that of Cheops in Egypt or that of the Sun in Teotihuacan. The square base measures a little more than 55 meters wide. The structure has nine bases in the form of square terraces whose walls are covered with panels that make bas-relief designs. The construction has four steep staircases in each of the four faces consisting of 91 steps that ascend to the top platform. The total sum of steps is 364 and considering the upper platform of the temple as one more step, the pyramid has 365 steps representing the days of the year in the ordinary Mayan calendar. Recently, a group of researchers from the National University of Mexico announced the discovery of a small



© Emilio Mendoza

pyramid inside the Kukulcan temple. The discovery was made using three-dimensional electrical tomography technology that analyses the interior without

damaging the structure. This matrioska doll-like phenomenon resembles the Great Pyramid of Cholula, which was built on top of other smaller constructions.



© Boletín UNAM-DGCS-791 (Dirección General de Comunicación Social, UNAM)

portfolio

clothes make the man

My experience producing an actor's portfolio

Actors must have the skill to impersonate a wide variety of characters. Changing their clothes and using attributes such as symbols of wealth or of poverty helps significantly because we all first judge by appearances. Additionally, good actors learn to change their language variant, their facial expression and their body language.

Gabi and I were asked by an actor friend, Asad Schwarz-Msesilamba, to produce photos for his portfolio to be sent to actor agencies. I loved the challenge, but I was afraid, I would not do well. Asad believed in us so he flew in from Berlin for an intense photo shoot weekend in March 2019, armed with a large suitcase of varied clothes and toiletry.

On Saturday, we started in Sesto Calende, using the stylish townhall and some graffiti-rich places along the river as backdrop, but we all felt awkward. We photographers would have needed the experience to direct him, tell him what to do. I felt that the photo scenes were often too cluttered and that my lens was not fast enough to sufficiently separate the model from the background.



When we moved on to the second location, a derelict castle, we started getting into the swing of things. Although we knew that actor agencies tend to show rather conservative pictures without too much expression, Asad started fooling around, making grimaces and doing funny things such as playing a drunkard in a bathtub (a Roman sarcophagus!).

For Asad and us, this phase was crucial because foolish photos are good for the mood. Funny shots relax, create bonding and trust. Asad wore suits, orthodox Jewish clothes, sweaters, woolly hats, farm clothes; he used a shovel, an axe, a farming trailer, old alcohol bottles. He also posed in an expensive-looking car, first imitating a fancy, then a shabby look. Towards the end of the first day, we had a feeling that things were going well, so we all deserved introducing Asad to the Italian Aperitivo culture.

On Sunday, we entered the old gunpowder factory Ex-Polveriera in Taino. Since it was abandoned in 1972, nature has taken over.

Moss and plants in factory halls, trees growing through windows and lots of graffiti were a great backdrop for that next set of pictures. The biggest challenge here was the low light.







And then, for a completely different experience, we used the club's photo studio for a clutter-free background and fully controllable lights. Unfortunately, the flash lights are so strong that I needed to close the aperture to F11 or F14, meaning that the depth of field was higher than I wished for. However, altogether, we were very happy with the resulting pictures.

Taking the 2,500 photos was the fun part (Gabi took another 1,500!). The next tasks were the selection of about 100 best pictures, minimal editing and ... customer expectation management. Asad wanted many more photos, including some that were of technically low quality so that we had to negotiate. The main

actor agency then did not agree with our choice and selected yet another set of pictures. Finally, I edited the selection properly. You now find my pictures of Asad (and Gabi's, as well) on the websites of [Red Carpet Actors](#), [Crew United](#), [Cast Forward](#) and [Schauspielervideos](#).

I learnt several things from this experience:

(1) I would have needed a portable flash light and it would have been good to use reflectors. The FCC does have such equipment for its club members, but at the same time using them would have required extra people and extra time.

(2) I became aware that I need to practise setting up studio lighting to avoid the randomness of trial and error.

(3) Either we need weaker studio lights or I need a camera that allows synchronisation with shorter exposure times than 1/160th of a second.

(4) It is crucial that the photo model can relax. It would make models feel safe if photographers had enough experience to authoritatively direct them. I find that it helps to start by taking fun pictures such as making grimaces or getting the model to act the six basic human emotions (joy, anger, fear, sadness, surprise, disgust).

Producing this actor portfolio was much work, but the experience was also very satisfying, I learnt a lot and we had a lot of fun!

Ralf



Ideas, tips and tricks

habitual places



Many photographers like to see and photograph as much as they can in the limited time they have. But are they missing something? Obviously yes!

Of course, it depends on personal preferences and time constraints. While it may not be possible to return frequently to far-off, exotic locations, there are always possibilities nearer home that can offer surprising results. A place to return to, get to know,

observe intently, dig under the surface, understand its moods and rhythms and explore the photographic potential that it can provide. Do you have habitual places where you create images?

I like nature photography so returning to a favourite spot, such as a nearby mountain area, a beach in Scotland or the shores of Lake Maggiore, offers the chance to really know the location and discover

something new on nearly every visit. It could also be, for example, your local town for street photography, or the plants in your garden! Try exploring with one lens at a time, from wide-angle to telephoto, on different days or without a camera at all.



As well as becoming more aware of your surroundings, looking more closely and discovering new images to record, there are the natural changes of weather and season. Scotland has a great fascination for me because the weather seems to change every 20 minutes, bringing a new light to completely change the atmosphere of the scene, so there can often be

numerous photographic opportunities within one day or even less. Then look around for the less obvious: there may be a beautiful seascape, but there will be smaller details that are equally worthy of your attention although less evident. The light may only be ideal for a small period of the day, to show some detail in the landscape that's not so noteworthy at other times.

The more often you return to the same location the more you will absorb its feeling and complexities resulting in more personal, intimate and beautifully unique images. Have fun and enjoy your habitual places!

Kevin

photos © Kevin Douglas





meet our members

Grégoire

I am a Belgian naturalist working in the field of biodiversity conservation who started rather recently capturing in images my encounters with our natural world.

More precisely, I took my first pictures with a reflex camera (Canon 400D) in 2007 when digital photography allowed me to learn independently using mainly a trial and error approach. I quickly learned the hard way that adequate and good equipment for outdoor activities should be taken as seriously as the photographic gear.

Wildlife photography is indeed particularly challenging, as it is (and should be) an outdoor activity requiring a lot of patience, luck and some good understanding of animal behaviour.

Considering that most biodiversity hot spots are difficult to access, it also means travelling abroad in sometimes difficult areas with heavy equipment. My gear alone is weighting more than 15 kg (mainly a Canon 5D Mk III + Canon 6D Mk II, Canon



Close encounter. Loango National Park, Gabon

lenses 500 mm f4, 70-200 f2.8, 16-35 f2.8, teleconverter 1.4, laptop + external drive, monopod, binoculars).

Personally, what I am trying to capture is the instant of the encounter with undisturbed wildlife in their undisturbed habitats. These encounters can last hours but most frequently a few minutes only.

I love wildlife photography because it gives me

unpredictable moments of real-life engagement with nature, which make me feel deeply connected to our world. Animals, from insects to birds, offer an incredible variety of patterns, shapes, colours and behaviours to capture.

Strangely, I often remember vividly each of the thousands of shots I have taken over the years while I barely can remember what I have done yesterday.



Mountain lion (puma), Torres del Paine National Park, Chile



A curious walrus, Arctic ocean around Svalbard



Dzanga-Sangha National Park, Central African Republic



Tiger and her cub, Tadoba National Park, India



Stick grasshopper, Bolivia

Because so many pictures are shot quickly without thinking about exposure, DOP or composition, I extensively use Lightroom for post processing.

My most memorable moments?

A trip to the Central African Republic where I could see gorillas and watch for hours a large group of bongos, forest buffalos and elephants in the middle of the rainforest.

The country is still very much a war zone and the area where I shot most pictures was subject to a dramatic poaching event a few years ago. The pictures I have taken there are the testimony that supporting NGOs can change everything. Here, the WWF brought locally back not only nature but peace and jobs.

The truth is however that I would be equally amazed by the beauty of some insects or spiders in the backyard of my house here in Italy.

I have compiled over the years a long list of tips and tricks for wildlife photography which you can find on my home page. I have found that learning from others to be incredibly valuable and therefore joined the JRC photo club. I would be happy to share with you further experiences.

Grégoire

photos © Grégoire Dubois

<https://gregoire-dubois.myportfolio.com/> 

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/wildlifepictures/> 

technique

the art of book making

Probably all of us have been at that point: there is this massive number of pictures that we have taken – and we have absolutely no idea of what to do with them. Sure, we can print some of them (even at the FCC Headquarters!) and put them up on the wall. This is great – if we only had more and bigger walls for ALL of our favourite pictures!

Furthermore, some of them belong together, should be viewed together, and not just on a screen. So, what other options do we have?

One way of going about this is to make a book. Maybe you think that this is a bit of a grand thing to do. After all, we are all amateurs. But trust me: it is absolutely worth it, especially for an amateur. Leafing through the finished book is absolutely rewarding and brings a sense of pride with it. And even better: you will immediately want to get out and take even more pictures so that you can start working on the next book.

There are plenty of software options and books around that can help you with getting started immediately. However, if you do not have the time to read all these books and teach yourself how to use the different programmes, there is another option:

you can take a book-making course, like the one that our teacher Ricardo Silva offers on a regular basis. Do not be mistaken: making a book is a lot of work. But also highly rewarding. Once you see your book printed, you know that it has been absolutely worth it.

During the process, you might have to say goodbye to some of your favourite pictures. You might be emotionally attached to them, know the story behind them – but the others (and you should look at them with other people!) simply do not see how they fit the story of your book. While choosing the pictures, you will already start arranging them. Which ones go next to each other on a spread – and which ones are so great that they deserve a whole spread for themselves? This can be a difficult choice but making it together with others might prove to be very helpful.

Once the sequencing of the pictures is clear, you will need to decide on the format of the book: landscape, portrait, or maybe quadratic. And what size? These choices will then have an influence on how you place your pictures on the different spreads. Do you prefer to have them centred or not? Do you want them to be in full bleed (i.e. covering the whole page without any

rim on the edges of the pages)?

Another thing that will prove to be surprisingly difficult is choosing fonts and colours for your book. How do they fit the theme of the book? Should they be clean or rather playful? And what influence does the spacing of the letters have on the overall look? For a beginner, this can be a bit tricky and having someone like Ricardo (who is also a graphic designer) guiding you through the process can prove to be very valuable.

In order to get some inspiration, it can be helpful to look at other photo books, be it the ones from professional photographers or amateur ones that you can find on websites like Blurb. You will get a feeling for what you like and what you dislike.

It does not hurt to know a little bit about how to post-process your pictures before you start with your book. This is not about doing fancy things (though you are of course free to do that) but you might have an overexposed corner here and there in your pictures and this should be fixed before printing, especially if you have a white background. Or you would like to make a certain element in your picture pop and therefore use a mask and change its exposure, contrast, etc.

One important thing that you should make sure of is using a calibrated screen (like the one at the FCC Headquarters) when processing your pictures. If you only look at them at your (probably uncalibrated) laptop screen, you might be in for a very nasty surprise when you receive your printed book.

During Ricardo's course, we used the software from Blurb to make our books. There are more sophisticated ones (like InDesign or Affinity Publisher) but Blurb is very easy and intuitive to use (though it does have its quirks...) and not a bad choice for your first book. When you are done, you can immediately send it off for printing to them. Once you have mastered the basics though, you might think about switching to a more professional layouting software, depending on your needs and budget.

In case you are curious now and would like to have a go at book making, get started immediately or wait for Ricardo to come back for a course season and guide you through the process. Whatever option you choose, it will be an amazing experience and do make sure to bring your book to one of the FCC meetings. It deserves to be admired!

Katja



© Katja Neugebauer



© Katja Neugebauer



© Katja Neugebauer



© Ricardo Silva



FotoCineClub FCC

The FotoCineClub (FCC) is a COPAS-supported club at the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) in Ispra, Italy. We invite all interested persons to join our activities and meetings, as well as our email distribution list and the WhatsApp group. Paying members can additionally participate in group decisions, use the club's equipment including our photo studio, receive photo journals and participate in courses (additional course fees apply). Membership fee for the year 2020 is 30 Euro.

committee: Gabi Breitenbach (president); Rudolf Hummel (vice-president); Eckehard Rosenbaum (treasurer); Ralf Steinberger (secretary); Kevin Douglas, Rosana Grecchi, Katja Neugebauer, Ute Stips (consiglieri).

administrative contact: fcc.jrc@gmail.com

email to reach all club members: JRC-FotoCineClub@googlegroups.com

membership form: <http://fotocineclub.weebly.com/registration.html>

about this issue

editors: Rudolf Hummel, Eva Grammatikaki

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the photos in the articles are © of the respective authors



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