

Shoot for the Moon

Monthly news and tips from
Landscape Photographer
Gill Moon



September 2021 Vol 14 - Finding your photographic style

Hello

and welcome to the September edition of 'Shoot for the Moon'

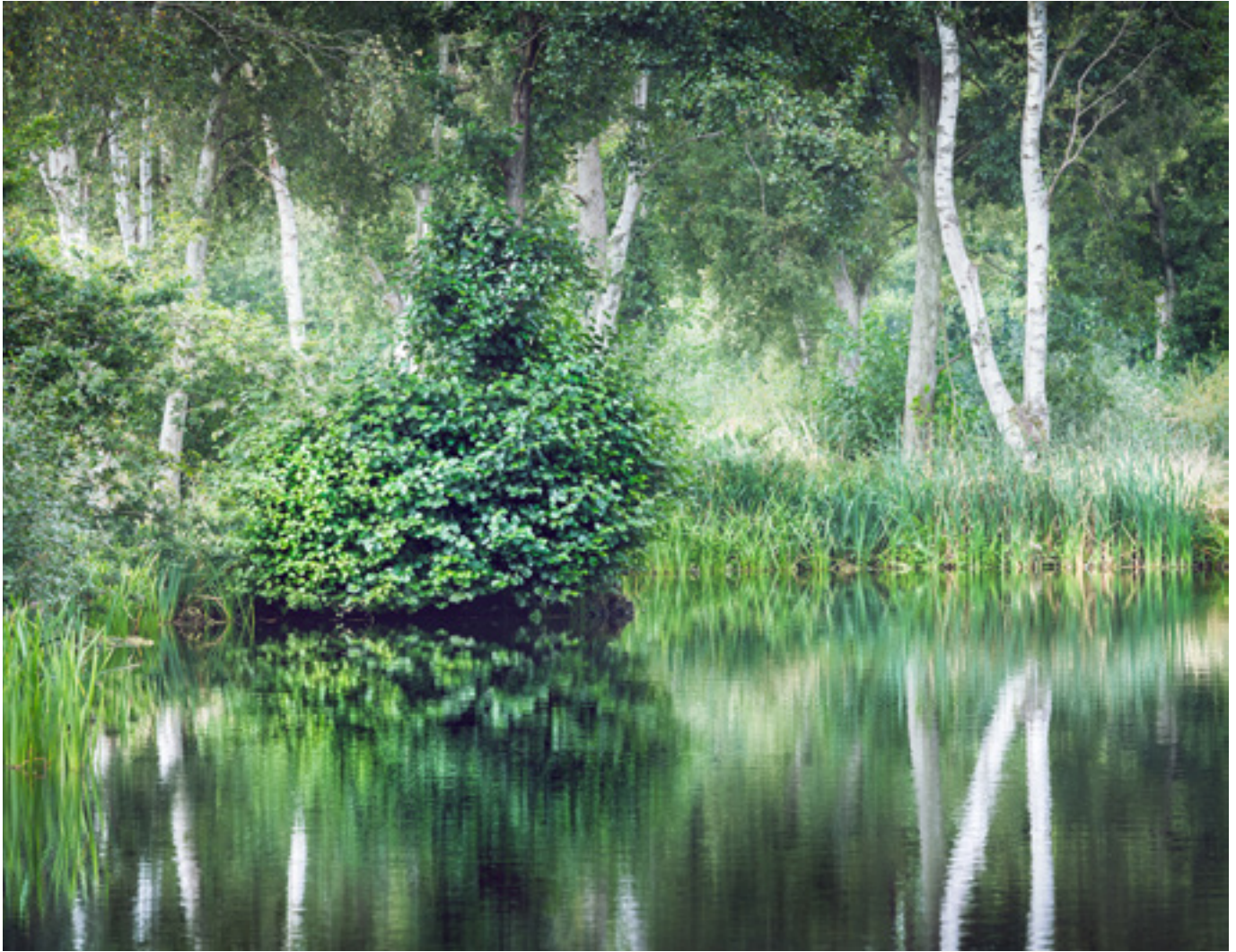
I haven't written a monthly "Shoot for the Moon" since January so felt it was time to relaunch and put out another edition. In the past these have been really well received so I hope you will find this issue interesting and informative. The subject was inspired by conversations with some workshop participants and I felt it was an interesting topic to explore. If you have any comments or thoughts on the subject I am always keen to receive your emails so please get in touch if you have anything you would like to share.

Remember to aim high, be inspired and shoot for the moon! Thank you and happy photographing

Gill

If you would like to get in touch please email me at gill@gillmoon.com

How to develop your style



We all have a unique photographic style whether we recognise it or not. It is the product of all the choices we make as photographers and is something that is continually evolving. It is defined by our preferences around particular subjects, location, lighting, viewpoint and processing and is something that we initially develop subconsciously. Once we recognise our style we can focus our photography and our work will become more targeted and accomplished.

Find out what inspires you - What genre do you like working with?

As you are here reading this I am assuming that some form of outdoor photography is your passion, but this label covers a wide

range of different genres from landscapes to macro and everything in between. Consider landscape photography and all the different options that this contains. You might shoot landscapes but do you prefer wide vistas, intimate scenes, mountains, seascapes or woodlands. Do you like to shoot in black and white or colour or are you drawn to a more creative form of expression such as intentional camera movement or in camera multiple exposure? Do you like minimalist shots, high key light scenes or dark and moody landscapes. There are numerous choices but the key comes in finding what you are naturally drawn to and developing that.

One way to do this is to look through your photographs going back a few months and try

to categorise the images you have taken. What do you notice about the subject matter and locations? Is there a theme or pattern to the style of your images?

Try going out with a notebook and before you shoot take some time to sit and reflect on the landscape in front of you. What appeals, how might you shoot it and are you drawn to certain aspects of the environment? As well as being a really mindful process spending time just sitting and reflecting in the landscape is a good way to see what really inspires you.

Shoot often

To find your voice in photography you need to speak. With this in mind go out as much as you can and take photographs. When you are shooting think about what you are trying to say. Are you just shooting a beautiful scene or is there something deeper that you want to convey?

There are a couple of ways that I like to ensure I am shooting as much as I should. The first is to shoot a panel of images. A great way to do this is to go on a photo walk, particularly as it gets you looking at the environment in a more detailed way and forces you to take images that you wouldn't normally take.



The fungi images were taken on a photowalk in Upper Hollesley Common last autumn. When doing this exercise it is a good idea to think about sequencing your panel and arranging your images so that they work well as a cohesive set.



These images above were shot using patters found in the sheet piling which edges Bawdsey Beach. The colours were formed by water running down the steel. I never thought I would photograph such a subject but I love the results.

Another way to ensure you take photos on a regular basis is to undertake a photography project. This is a great opportunity to find your voice and focus on something that you are really passionate about. If you are interested in doing this my advice would be to find something or somewhere local, that is easily accessible and that you can return to time and time again. Next think about what you want to say - a project needs a theme and a story that will resonate with your audience.

My project that went to print at the beginning of 2021 was about a year of nature connection on Hollesley Marshes. I worked on it through the first Covid lockdown and it documents my morning walks through the reserve and along the sea wall and riverside paths.

I processed all the images in black and white to give the project a cohesive feel and then added some words which I feel convey the whole essence of being in this particular landscape at a particular time.



Learn as much as you can

Inspiration is everywhere and I think it is important to work out what inspires you. You can do this by looking at the work of other photographers. Analyse their images and ask yourself why you like them. Read up on techniques, inspiring professionals and genres of photography. Take a workshop or photo course and open your mind to how others shoot and see the world. Photography is not just about learning the technical side of capturing an image, it is about connecting with the landscape, seeing the world in a certain way and having something that you want to convey through your images. I find that learning through others really opens your mind to different ways of seeing and it might just help you consolidate your thoughts and inspire you to try something different. There is never “nothing to learn” and definitely never “nothing to photograph.”

Shoot for yourself

Don't take photos for likes on social media. It might be instantly gratifying but is it really you that is speaking or do you change the style of

your images to suit your audience? Are you only showing images that you think will be popular? Personally I work on the basis that I would rather not post at all than post something I wasn't happy with or which I thought went against my style or what I am trying to say.

Have a voice - what do you want to say?

If I have a message that I want to get across it is that photography is about feeling something for your subject and channeling those emotions into image making much more than it is about expensive kit and complicated techniques. Having a message is as important to defining your style as technique and well crafted images.

Editing is important.

I firmly believe that editing plays a major role in the development of your style. Regardless of the programme you use your editing will develop over time and with practice. Ultimately you will find that you are drawn to certain processing styles which will have a major influence on the overall look of your work.

How would I define my style?

My photography is all about the natural world. Nature connection is at the heart of all I do. For me photography is about connecting with the landscape I am shooting. So I tend to shoot natural environments - seascapes, floral landscapes and woodlands. I have been told I have a very feminine style - I love subtle colours, misty mornings and dawn light and I think over time my images have developed and I have been drawn to portray the beauty in the landscape. My processing style is light, subtle and dreamy. Overall I want to convey my deep love of the natural world and encourage others to care by connecting to the same places through my images.



Inspiration

There are lots of very good photographers out there but the ones that have a voice and a definitive style stand out because they are different.

Here are a few photographers who have inspired me over the years.

Finn Hopson is a South Downs photographer with a very definitive style. His work is simple, beautiful and minimalistic and is all about shape and subtle colour. He works across three different genres fieldwork, woodwork and waterwork and although all three are completely different subjects the overall feel of the images is the same. They all have a style that is easily identifiable.
www.finnhopson.com

Edd Allen

Edd is another photographer based in the South Downs. His website gallery is split into land, sea and macro and I feel that he has a definitive style which runs through all three different genres.
www.eddallenphotography.com

Simon Baxter

Simon is a photographer based in Yorkshire. He specialises in atmospheric woodland photography with a very definite style using misty conditions and a fairly muted colour pallet. If you are intersted in checking out his work he also has an intersting and informative YouTube channel.
www.baxter.photos

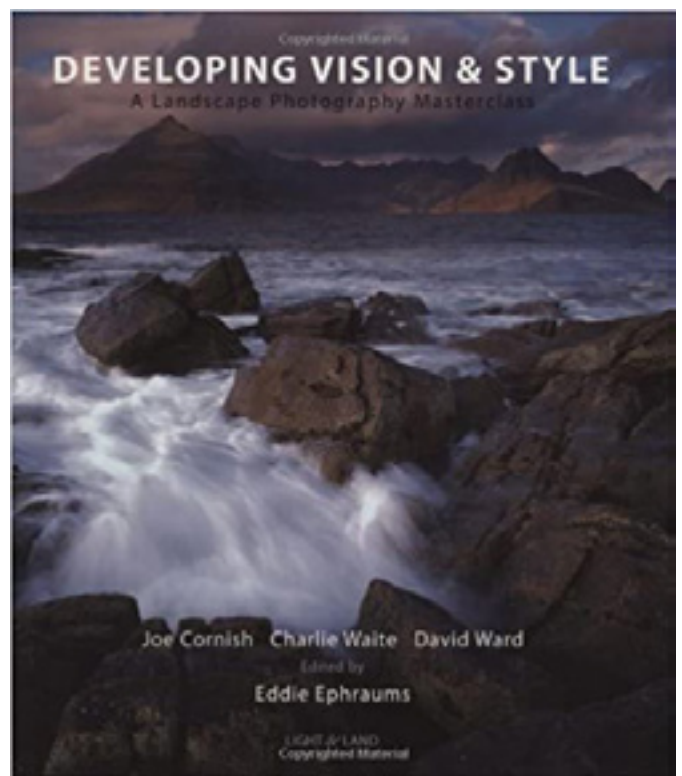
Joe Cornish

Joe is a well known Yorkshire based landscape photographer who's work I have found really inspirational. In an article about Vision and Style he describes his vision as outward looking in terms of approach and composition and his use of light as the inherent quality in his images. His vision is based on the belief

that the subject is the most impotant thing rather than the photographer.
www.joecornishgallery.co.uk

If you are intersted in reading more about vision and style in photography then I can recommend the following book:

Developing Vision and Style by Joe Cornish, Charlie Waite and David Ward and edited by Eddie Ephraums,



Photographing misty mornings

With summer gradually retreating and the autumn approaching we are likely to get a few more misty mornings over the coming weeks.

Mist is beautiful and can really enhance a landscape but it can be difficult to capture so here are a few hints and tips.

1. Keep an eye on the weather. I use the Clear Outside App which gives you all the usual details along with the humidity and dew point. Fog forms when the difference between air temperature and dew point is less than 2.5 °C and mist forms when the relative humidity is greater than about 70%. You also need light winds.

Est. Sky Quality: 21.25 Magnitude Class 4 Bortle										
Tue 7	Solar rise 06:17 set 19:27 dark 21:29 - 04:14					Lunar 1% rise 06:19 set 20:07				
Time	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09
Visibility	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
Fog	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rain										
Chance	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Amount	0.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wind	↖ 6	↖ 5	↖ 4	↖ 4	↖ 3	↖ 3	↖ 3	↖ 3	↖ 4	↖ 5
Frost										
Temp. °C	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	17	19
Feels Like	17	16	16	16	16	16	16	16	17	19
Dew Point	16	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
Humidity	96	95	95	95	96	97	96	94	87	81

2. Choose your location carefully. Mist enhances most images and if conditions are light with the promise of some sunrise colours I would head to the river or the heath. If

visibility is poor then I would head for the woods where the conditions are likely to add atmosphere and simplify the scene.

3. Mist has the tendency to reduce the colour and contrast of a scene. It also has the ability to deceive your cameras metering system so it is advisable to check your histogram regularly and overexpose your images by one or two stops.

4. Make sure you take a lens cloth with you as misty conditions tend to result in moisture forming on your lens and filters.

5. When processing your images afterwards you might find you need to adjust your white balance to preserve the cool feeling of a misty morning.



Part of the Landscape

A Landscape Photography
Workbook
By
Gill Moon

