

Shoot for the Moon

Monthly news and tips from Landscape Photographer
Gill Moon



January 2022 Vol 16

Challenge yourself to better photography

Hello

Happy New Year and welcome to January's edition of my landscape photography journal
'Shoot for the Moon'

This month's edition is all about finding new inspiration for the new year. During the short days of winter it can be easy to get disheartened with bad weather or dull conditions. So this edition is all about looking for new ideas and seeking inspiration in different techniques or projects. Hopefully there will be something here to inspire you all.

If you have any comments or thoughts on any aspect of photography 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

Challenge yourself to better photography

The new Year offers us a fantastic opportunity to reflect on our photography, to work out what is going right, what doesn't work and to try and inspire ourselves for another year of image making. This edition of Shoot for the Moon is all about setting yourself some new challenges for 2022 to help take your photography to the next level.

Look back at 2021

Before you begin sit down and look back at the images you made in 2021 and really consider what worked and what didn't. Was there a particular style of photography that you favoured, a creative technique that inspired you or a particular subject or location that fired your imagination.

Reflection is always good. It enables you to see whether your photography has taken a specific direction and whether there are any subjects that you favour over others. It's a good way of defining your passion for something and can tell you where you should focus your attention in the future. It also tells you if there are any aspects of your photography that are weak and that you could perhaps improve on with a bit of extra focus or tuition.

Shoot different subjects

It's easy to find ourselves stuck in a rut, drawn to the same subject matter, feeling that we can't make compelling images if we are not in our favourite landscapes. This is clearly nonsense and probably has more to do with our perceived passion for an environment than our ability to capture it. So if you are feeling underwhelmed by your local environment why not try something new.

If you always shoot on the coast head for the woods, if the drama of the mountains is your usual draw head for the flat landscapes of the south and east. This exercise is all about

coming out of your comfort zone, learning how to see new landscapes and practicing compositions in unfamiliar environments.

Similarly if shooting the wider landscape is your preferred method of landscape photography try swapping your wide angle lens for a telephoto and focus in on smaller areas of the view. Try cutting out the sky and look for sections within the landscape that would stand alone as a compelling image.



This image was made at Covehithe. It was one of a series of images which I made which focused on longish exposures to create streaky water. I spent a while working out which shutter speed gave the best effects in the water. This shot had an exposure of 4 seconds at F11.

Setting some limits

Sometimes when we head out with the camera it can be difficult to think of somewhere new to visit or something new to photograph. This is where setting yourself some limits can be

really useful.

Try visiting a familiar location but instead of photographing it how you would normally, set yourself some boundaries. These could be physical or creative. Examples might be:

- find something to photograph within a 10m square area of landscape

- shoot at just one focal length - try 24mm one day then 70mm another day and restrict yourself to this focal length only.

- shoot using a wide angle lens and practice finding foreground to enhance your wide angle images.

- take all your shots in portrait orientation. This is not the usual first choice for landscape photography but it can reward you with some interesting compositions so is definitely worth a try.

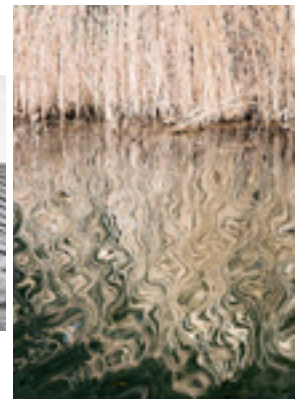
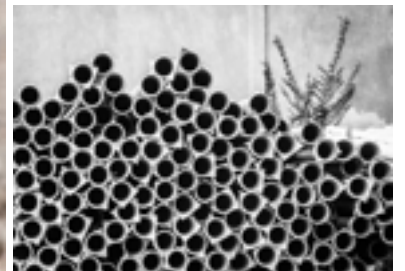
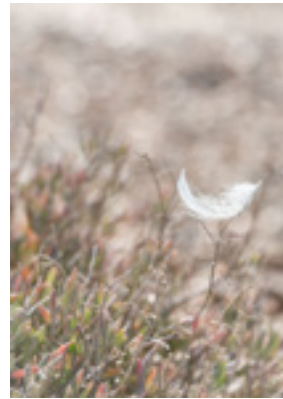
- shoot intimate landscapes only. Make sure you cut out the sky from each image and focus on a small portion of the landscape. This exercise also really hones your observational skills.



This is an image of frost covered decaying leaves. It is a subject that I wouldn't normally contemplate but the presence of the frost added an extra quality to the decaying leaves which I found quite attractive. Photographing intimate landscapes definitely improves your observation and for this reason is a really useful exercise.

Shoot regularly

There is no better way to improve your photography than getting out regularly with your camera. Photographing every day, even if it is only for a week really helps get the creative juices flowing. You don't need to commit to something major like a 365 project. Try starting with a 7 day project but set some limits. On day one, take only one image. On day two take two images and so on until day seven where you take seven images. Make sure that for day one you select the one image that best captures your chosen location. As the week progresses and you take more images try to be creative. Make sure all your images are different. Use a range of focus lengths and viewpoints and a selection of wide shots and intimate landscapes.



These four images were taken on a walk around the village where I live. They show a variety of different shots that all derive from good observation. They weren't taken in very good light but never the less they tell a good story about the landscape through which I walked. They are not my usual type of images but there is something about all of them that I really like.

Shoot a panel of images

Photography panels are a great way to focus your photography and hone your skills. Find a subject that appeals and think about how you could take 6 images or 10 images to represent that subject. The beauty of this exercise is that you really need to think about your images as a whole not as individual images. All 6 shots need to work together as a visually appealing piece of art. They should be tonally similar and should work well compositionally with their neighbours.



This panel was a series of images I put together to enter the RHS Photography Portfolio competition. All the images work tonally well together. They convey the character of the wood and are arranged in an order which creates a visual flow from one image to the next.

This panel won me a silver - gilt medal in the competition and the images were featured in an exhibition at the Saachi Gallery in London.

There are a number of ways you can use your panel images. The Royal Photographic Society (RPS) offer distinctions based on the panel format.

An LRPS qualification requires 10 images which must show variety in approach and techniques but not necessarily in subject matter. While an ARPS requires a strong body of work and a written Statement of Intent.

For more information see

www.rps.org/qualifications

The competition that I entered was the

RHS annual photographic competition and I entered the portfolio category. More information can be found at www.rhs.org.uk/promotions/rhs-photo-competition/rhs-photo-competition-categories

Work on a project

Projects are a great way to inspire your photography. They give you a subject and a reason to keep going out and making images. A project need not be a grand adventure, it could be something as simple as photographing a local place over the course of a year or maybe a specific object with a story attached to it. Whatever you choose make sure it is something that interests and inspires you so that you will want to keep working on it.

I have completed a couple of projects in the last two years which both focus on local areas. The first was a lockdown project about Hollesley Marshes

www.gillmoon.com/projects/grounded-book

and the second was a two year project to photograph a local ancient woodland

www.gillmoon.com/projects/rooted

For both projects I collected well over 200 hundred images which I then distilled into 50 for a book for each project.

There are numerous companies out there that allow you to print photo books and these are a great way to display your project.

Try:

www.cewe.co.uk

www.whitewall.com

www.blurb.co.uk

Alternatively if you don't want to print a photobook try making your own with a large journal or scrap book. Select the best images from your project and print them on photo art paper to add to your journal. This can be a great way to personalise your project as you can add notes and annotations next to your images. This practice is a good way to learn from the work you have made.

Tell a story

Every picture tells a story, but how do we really get our message across. This summer I will be running a new collaborative project *Planet Suffolk, love letters from a changing world* - which will be accompanied by a series of story telling workshops.

Planet Suffolk - love letters from a changing world is an environmental photography project which sets out to record and preserve for future generations the aspects of the environment that are important to Suffolk residents or visitors in 2022, what we care about and what concerns us. The visual stories represent tokens of love, care and concern for the local landscapes, wildlife and habitats we are keen to see preserved for future generations.

This collaborative project gives you the opportunity to have your images published in the Planet Suffolk book and website.

There will be more information about this new project coming soon but if you would like to be involved please email me to register your interest.

www.gillmoon.com/2021/11/19/visual-storytelling



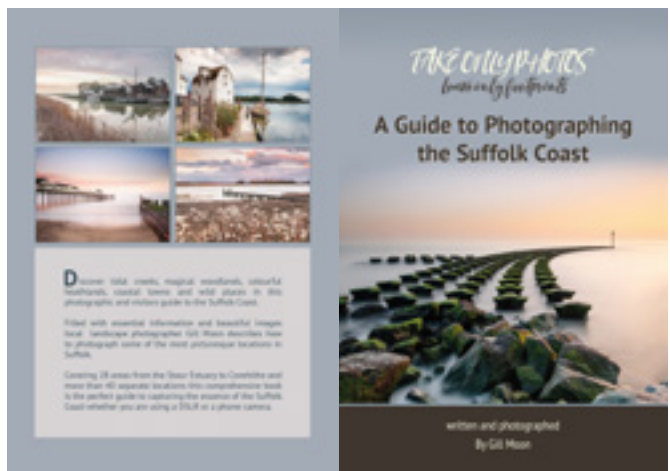
Book a workshop

Attending a workshop is a great way of learning something new. Even if you are competent with a camera and think that you know how to take a good photo there is always something that you can learn from someone else. I see photography as a journey where your work is constantly evolving so any time you spend with another photographer getting to know how they see the world and approach their craft is time well spent.

My workshops come in a variety of formats and range from small group workshops to 1-2-1 tuition which is specifically tailored to your needs and can include photography and post processing in my Hollesley Studio. Workshops and 1-2-1 tuition can be booked for a half day or a full day.

If you are exploring Suffolk and would like a guide to photographic locations then I still have a few copies of my book available from my website.

www.gillmoon.com/suffolk-coast-book



Attend a Photo Walk

Photo walks can be an inspiring concept because they give you a focus for your photography.

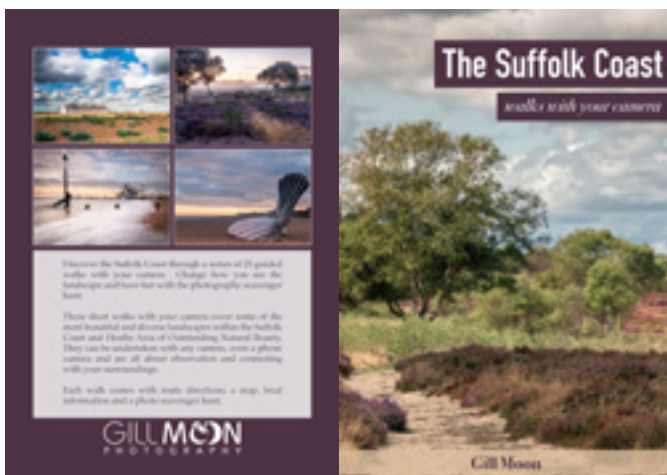
This year I will be bringing back my Cameras, Cake and Coffee Photowalks which are a great way to get to know other photographers and with a list of items to hunt for they make a challenging way to walk with your camera.

The first walk of 2022 will take place on Sunday 24th April at Walberswick.

www.landscapephotographytuition.co.uk/photo-walks



If you like the idea of the scavenger hunt format then I still have copies of my walking book available from my website. This book features 25 walks with your camera along the Suffolk Coast.



Competitions and awards

Like them or loathe them competitions are a good way to focus your mind and creativity.

For landscape photography there are numerous competitions to consider including:

Landscape Photographer of the Year (LPOTY)

Founded by Charlie Waite in 2006 there is a fee to enter. The 2022 competition is now open for entries.

www.lpoty.co.uk

Nature TTL Photographer of the Year competition

Deadline for entries is 13th February 2022.

www.naturettl.com/poty

The Natural Landscape Awards

This competition was set up in 2021. There is no information on their website yet about the 2022 competition but it is worth checking out the website and keeping the competition in mind.

naturallandscapeawards.com

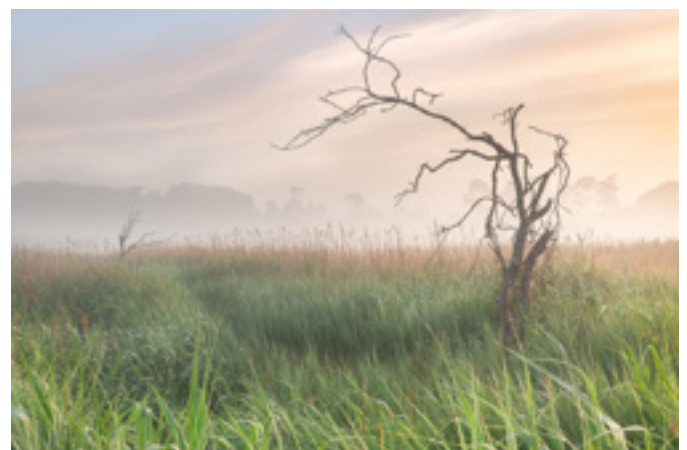
The Amateur Photographer of the Year (APOY)

Run in association with Amateur Photography Magazine

www.amateurphotographer.co.uk/apoy

Royal Photographic Society Awards (RPS)

If competitions are not your thing but you would like to strive for an award then the RPS offer awards for different levels of achievement. www.rps.org



Day Workshops for 2022

Seascapes – Vision & Style Workshop

Saturday 5th March 2022 6am – 1pm. Shingle Street, Slaughden and Sizewell.



Join me for a Seascape session where we will explore some different styles of seascape photography taking inspiration from the work of other renowned seascape photographers. We will be taking in a sunrise (weather permitting) and will be exploring shapes in composition, minimalist seascapes, movement in water and ICM.

By looking at other photographers work we will explore various styles of seascape photography and consider our approach to style and vision as we try to apply certain photographic methods to our image making.

We will cover:
Our approach to seascapes – drawing on inspiration from other photographers we will explore minimalist composition, long exposures, movement and ICM and composition using shapes and black and white post production.

www.landscapephotographytuition.co.uk

Sunrise & Long Exposure Workshop

Sunrise and long exposure workshop 6.30am – 1.30pm Saturday 19th February 2022



Join me for a 7 hour photography workshop exploring 2 different coastal locations Dovercourt Bay and Felixstowe.

The workshop begins at dawn in Dovercourt Bay where we will spend some time photographing the low lighthouse. The workshop is timed for sunrise at low tide so there will be a good range of elements to use in our foregrounds including wooden groynes, sand patterns and tidal pools.

From Harwich we will travel to Landguard Point in Felixstowe where there will be opportunities to experiment with long exposure using the old pier and the wooden structures in front of the docks. The workshop will finish at Cobbold Point where we can use the iconic breakwaters at high tide to practice our long exposure photography.

The workshop will focus on the use of filters for capturing the early morning colour as well as working with some long exposure photography. I have a selection of Lee Filters which are available to borrow for the duration of the workshop so please request this option when booking.

Residential Workshops for 2022

On the Edge of Exmoor

4 day photography workshop
13th – 16th May 2022



RESIDENTIAL WORKSHOP

A fantastic opportunity to explore a beautiful and diverse area of the West Country, where the north Somerset coastline meets the rugged wilds of Exmoor National Park. Steeped in history and characterised by some fascinating geology this coastline is a mix of stunning landscapes perfect for photography.

During our stay we will be based at the Porlock Weir Hotel overlooking the picturesque historic harbour. The hotel offers an atmosphere of 'peaceful nurture', perfect for relaxing after a day out with the camera.

We will be visiting a variety of locations including: Kilve Beach, Holford Woods, Porlock Weir, Watersmeet and the Valley of the Rocks, a stunning location perfect for sunset and with sweeping views along the North Devon Coast.

The photography side of the workshop will be accompanied by some time with the computer looking at post processing using Lightroom and Photoshop. We will cover workflow and how to get the best from your images as well as looking at some more advanced techniques including panoramas, bracketing and focus stacking.

North Norfolk Coast

3 day photography workshop
27th May – 29th May 2022



RESIDENTIAL WORKSHOP

A wonderful opportunity to explore the North Norfolk Coast in springtime. This workshop is based at the Manor Hotel in Blakeney which is one of my favourite locations on the Norfolk Coast and one that I have been visiting for many years.

The North Norfolk Coast is situated in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is a diverse mix of tidal salt marsh, creeks, sand dunes and characterful villages and harbours. It is renowned for its wildlife and is a fantastic place to explore photographically at any time of the year.

During the workshop we will be visiting Blakeney, Morston Quay, Cley, Sheringham park, Thornham Old Harbour and Old Hunstanton.

To find out more about both workshops please visit:

www.landscapephotographytuition.co.uk