

# Gill Moon Photography Photo Club

## February 2024 Challenge Transition zones

*Hello*

and welcome to my monthly photo challenges.

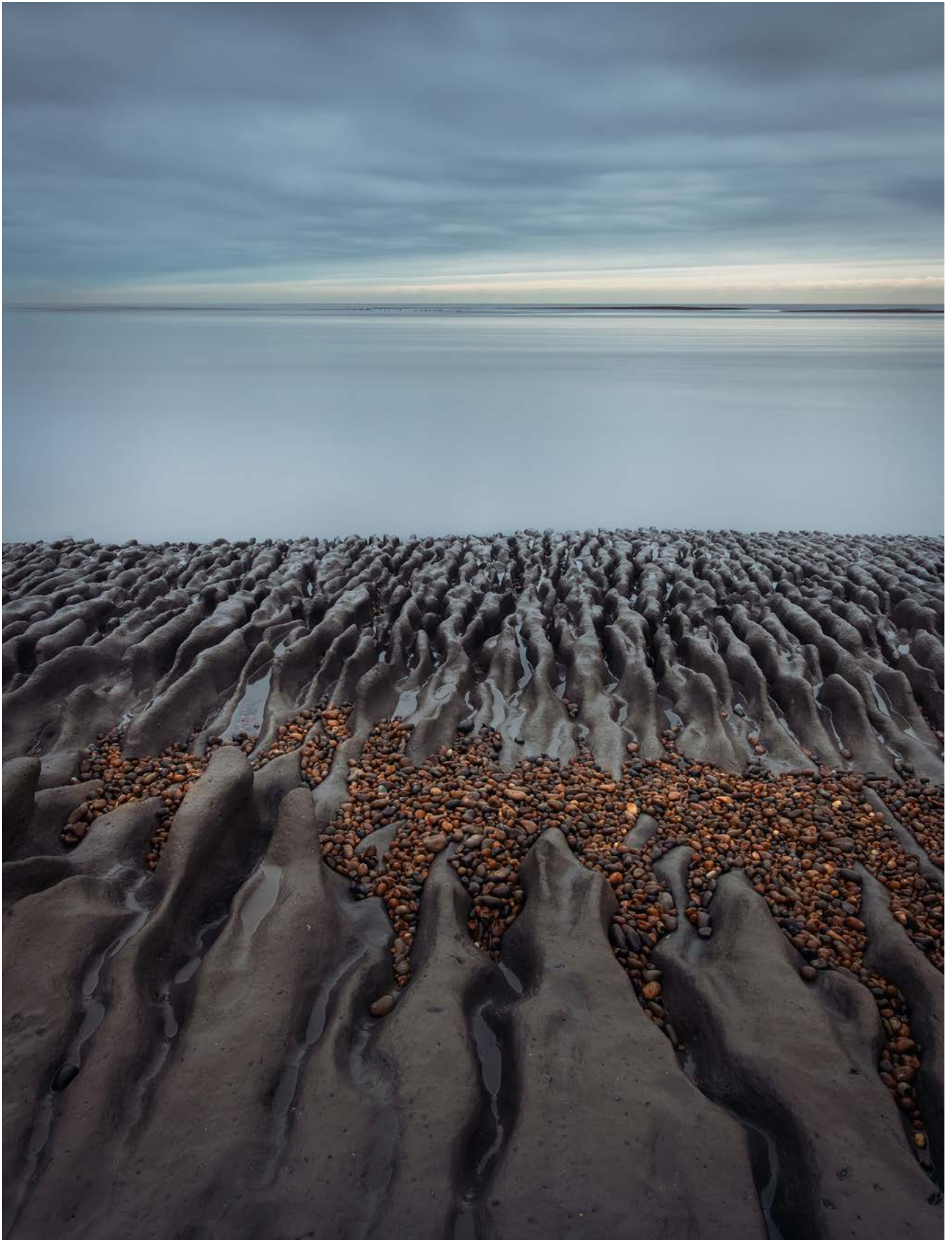
Each month I will be setting a new challenge for club members to work with. The challenges are not designed to be competitive but they are designed to be fun and inspiring and help you grow as a photographer.

Every monthly challenge will be followed by a 1.5 hour Zoom session (which is entirely optional) on the last Wednesday of every month where we will discuss some of the submitted images and talk about what worked and what didn't. I hope this feedback will be useful.

Thank you very much for being part of the Photo Club and I hope you will find it a fun and rewarding challenge.

Gill.

# Transition Zones in Landscape Photography



Welcome to another monthly photo challenge.

This month's challenge is all about transition zones in landscape photography and it has been inspired by a photograph I took on the Suffolk Coast earlier this month.

The photograph in question is the one on the first page. It shows an area of mudstone at the edge of the sea and was interesting to me for a number of different reasons.

Firstly the grooved mud has some lovely shadow areas which really enhanced the shapes of the channels. The shingle that sits on top of the mud gives a pleasing contrast in texture and colour and my choice of a 30 second exposure has smoothed out the water making the foreground really stand out from the smoother background. The mud on its own is interesting but it is the presence of the other elements that really makes a captivating image.

It is where these elements meet that I think of as transition zones. This is the subject of this month's challenge.

There are a number of transition zones in this image. Where the different colours and textures of the shingle meet the mud and where the smoothness of the water meets the textured foreground.

You will find numerous transition zones like this in all aspects of landscape photography but for this challenge I am going to focus on three:

1. Where texture meets smooth
2. Where light meets dark
3. Where different colours meet

I will discuss each of these in turn and then your challenge will be to produce two images using two of these transition zones.

## Where texture meets smooth

There are numerous ways in which a difference in textures can be achieved within an image. The first way is to find two elements that have obviously different textures. In this image below the shingle on the right provides an obvious contrast in texture to the white rock on the left. These elements have naturally different textures.



However not all elements can be separated by their texture alone and they need the introduction of a third element to create the separation. Here we can use the movement of water to create the separation as in the image below.





The image above was taken at Hapisburgh. I was attracted to the pebbles on the beach but they blended with the sand and water at the tideline and made quite a confused image with too many different textures. To simplify the scene I used a 30 second exposure to blur the motion of the waves and create a misty feel around the pebbles. The image now has two zones, one textured and one smooth. I think it is this contrast that simplifies the scene and makes the image interesting.



The image above works in a similar way. It was taken at Kilve in Somerset and shows a section of textured limestone pavement at the edge of the sea. Again I elected to slow my shutter speed to create a smooth area where the sea meets the limestone. It is this transition between the two areas - smooth and textured that makes the composition work.



This image of Dovercourt lighthouse uses motion blur on the sea in a similar way to create a distinction between the rippled sand and the water. It is the difference in texture that makes the image interesting. In this case I used a 2.5 second exposure as the water was already quite still. This was enough to remove most of the texture from the breaking waves and add some interest to the foreground of the shot. If I had left the texture in the sea the image would have been more complicated and visually more busy and this would have detracted from the lighthouse.

I chose to process this image in black and white as I felt it took away the added complication of colour, simplifying the scene even more and making the foreground all about the difference in contrast between the textured areas and the smooth sea.



So far I have just spoken about highlighting a textured area by blurring the water that surrounds it. However it is possible to emphasise shapes by using the motion of the water to create some texture.

The image above shows an area of sea at the mouth of the River Ore. The tide here runs very fast and creates eddies which travel in various patterns around the mouth of the river. By using a 5 second exposure I was able to exaggerate these by smoothing out the rest of the water whilst still retaining enough texture in the eddies to show the movement of the water.



This stretch of coastline is covered with large areas of mudstone running in slab like structures across the beach. The structures have edges and hollows which disturb the moving water and create lines and patterns when using a 1 or 2 second exposure. By positioning myself at the end of one of these edges I could use the line of breaking water in my composition to lead the eye into the image. The breaking water has filled the channels and my choice of shutter speed has rendered this white so making them more pronounced.

The mudstone on this part of the coast is very textured and uniformly grey but by using the moving water to create patterns and textures the foreground is transformed. For me this shot only works with the presence of water, at low tide I find the compositions much too busy.



### Where light meets dark

Transition zones which use the interaction between light areas and dark areas can be very powerful when it comes to creating images with impact. This technique is often found in street photography but it is also something that has been used in landscapes. A good example comes from Alastair Benn in his 'Out of Darkness' project which you can read about here [expressive.photography/portfolios/out-of-darkness](http://expressive.photography/portfolios/out-of-darkness)

In this image above I have used the rising sun and the light and shadow it created to make the contrast between the dark shingle bank in the foreground (which was in shadow) and the cottage and light on the water in the centre of the image. In post processing I have exaggerated these contrasts to give the image some added impact.



This is another image that works on the transition between lights and darks with the darker shadow area in the foreground contrasting nicely with the lighter sunlit area in the background.

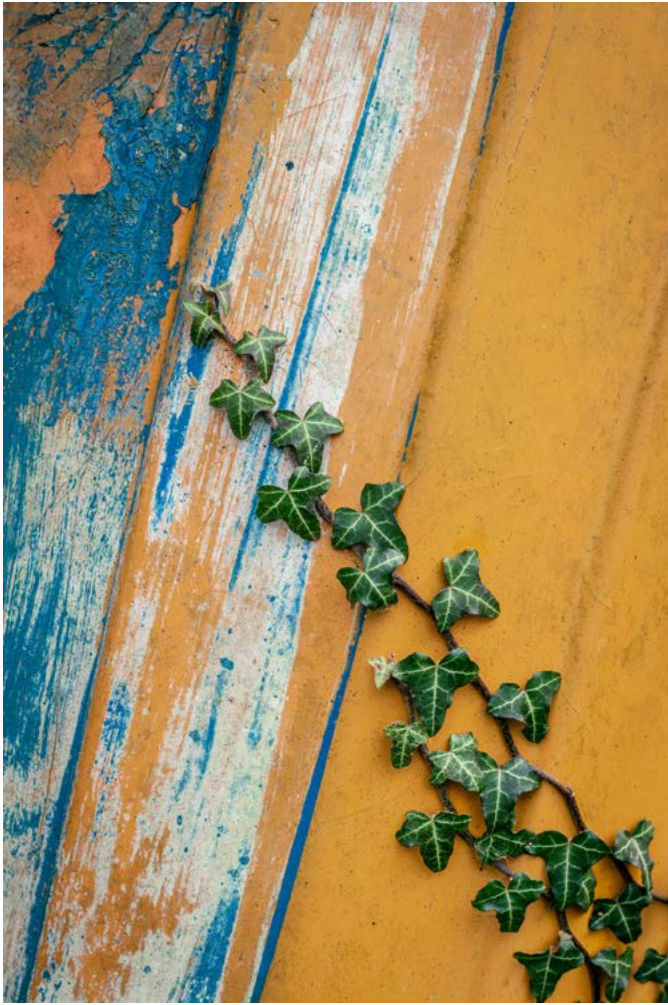
This image focus on the area where shadow meets sunlight. I used the patterns of wind blown water to add some interest in the transition zone although the image would have worked just as well without this feature.



#### Where different colours meet

Another way to create transition zones of interest is to focus on the interaction between two different colours and create a composition around the point where two different colours meet.

This image above was taken in my local woodland and shows some moss creeping over an old tree stump. The shot works because the difference in colour is quite striking - the vibrant green contrasts very well with the almost monotone colouring of the tree stump.



This image is similar in that it is the contrast between the yellows of the background boat hull and the greens of the ivy that create a striking visual contrast. I also like the way the ivy is growing in the opposite direction to the rest of the diagonals in the frame.

Colour can also be used in a wider context as in the shot on the following page which was taken at Thurne. The two principal colours in this image are pale blue and green. The blue area of the image is very flat and devoid of detail while the green area is textured with all the vegetation. It is this contrast between the flat blue and the textured green areas of the image that give this composition some impact.



## February's Photo Challenge

You will find numerous transition zones like the ones discussed in all aspects of landscape photography. For this month's challenge I would like you to produce two images focusing on transition zones from the following list:

1. **Where texture meets smooth** - you can use naturally occurring textured and smooth subjects or you can create smoothness by using motion blur as I did with the water.
2. **Where light meets dark** - you can use any areas where shadow and highlights come together and you can process in colour or black and white.
3. **Where different colours meet** - this can be a close up image or a wider landscape as long as the image is composed mainly of just two colours.

The Zoom session for this challenge will take place on Wednesday 28th February at 7pm. The link and details will follow in an email.

