

Public appeal

I found Issy Arnett's review of the exhibition of this year's UPY images at the Gosport Museum and Art Gallery a fascinating read because it was from someone unaffected by being an underwater photographer.

By unaffected I mean that she is not an underwater photographer and so reacted to the images on another unfettered level - technically free to enjoy them for what they are - images which communicate.

As underwater photographers we often look at technicalities first - sharpness and edge definition, for example, rather than the overall effect so it is refreshing to hear Issy's response and for her to highlight how much she liked Martyn Guess's 'Pash and Pal' shot of a diver and seal interaction.

I suspect that underwater photographers would be affected by the stray weightbelt strap in our goal of technical tidiness and this would be negative for us but not so for Issy.

Overall she also found the images thought provoking - especially the Save Our Seas Marine Conservation category because "it is important for these images to be seen; striking for very different reasons to their warmer and fuzzier exhibition counterparts.

Sometimes it's good to hear from the outside.

BBC Wild Isles

The most recent blue chip Attenborough series 'Wild Isles' screened on British TVs recently and it may well have been released worldwide too but, if it hasn't or you missed it, make sure you check it out.

Three years in the making, covering spectacular wildlife and habitats from mountains, forests and plains via freshwater to the sea, it is a visual celebration of our small, but perfectly formed islands. Stunning orca behaviour from Shetland, time lapse life in kelp beds, salmon migration and tuna frenzies were particular highlights.

The production quality from Silverback was superb and the underwater content, shot mainly by Doug Anderson, was groundbreaking. UwP is hoping to have a behind the scenes interview with Doug in the next issue and also Richard Davies who shot unique salmon footage with an ROV.

A final episode filmed in tandem but not actually part of the series was released on iPlayer and highlighted the perilous nature of our wildlife in terms of density with Homo Sapiens, river pollution and global warming as the main culprits.

Editorial

AI

These two small letters which, when combined rather like atomic molecules, have been whipping the media into a self feeding frenzy because the technology can teach itself at a rate of multiplication which quite genuinely defies belief.

It is this rate of development which, once unleashed, becomes all devouring with an insatiable appetite and thirst for knowledge. With it comes a form of intelligence which develops human-like nuances seeming artificial at first but then seeming capable of overtaking us in the not too distant future.

Photographically it came to the fore when a photographer used AI to create an image which was entered into a high profile land based competition.... and it won. The photographer was completely open about it and used it not to cheat but to highlight how blurred (pun intended) the boundaries now are.

Underwater photography will no doubt be next and might already, like a Triffid, be developing.

Photoshop was once seen as the death nell but proved to be a partner. AI has much darker overtones to my simple mind.

Flipping

I bet that most underwater photographers who feel the need, or enjoy, post processing their images rarely think of 'flipping them' - that is flipping them horizontally (or sometimes vertically) to see if it would look any better.

The excellent and graphically simple cover image on this issue is another eye catching shot but I thought it would look more appealing if it was flipped. The original is in Brook Pyke's lovely selection of Portraits on page 47.

As with anything to do with images, it is always entirely personal and, as the late, great Terence Donovan is attributed "It's all about having an opinion". I thought that the flipped image was much more logical on the eye which naturally scans from left to right so the Title is first followed by the Sea lion. Left 'unflipped' the Title and the subject would have clashed visually.

In this particular case something has been added, i.e. the Title, which has upset the balance and I suspect that the majority of your shots, because you shot them that way, are best left as they are but don't let that stop you experimenting sometimes.

You never know til you try and it's easy to undo if it doesn't work out.