

## **The tools of travel photography to make your travel photos work with David H. Wells**

Making exceptional travel photographs requires skills in many different types of photography, from street photography to still-life work to portraits. In a typical day of travel, a photographer may shoot busy festivals, quiet buildings, open landscapes, or close-up nature. The best travel photographers are versatile in their skills and fluid in their process, using minimal gear to achieve a maximum of results.

This presentation explores the following topics:

- The traveling photographer's camera and bag
- Being in the right place at the right time
- Varying the time of day and understanding light
- Portraying people
- Composition
- Stopping action vs. showing motion
- Framing and scaling; tripods
- Using the appropriate lens

The best travel photos are symbolic images that convey the mood of a place as they “bring” the viewer to the place. The best ones are made not from the viewpoint of an observer but rather from the viewpoint of someone who is actively engaged in the event. Good travel photographs make seemingly boring things interesting, even unique and magical. You also need to be comfortable taking pictures in unusual places, which requires you to carry yourself confidence as well as to treat your subjects with respect. For many people, travel photography combines two of their favorite passions, travel and photography.

*David H. Wells is a free-lance photographer based in Providence, R.I. and affiliated with Aurora Photos. He is a specialist in intercultural communication and visual narratives that excel in their creative mastery of light, shadow and sound, stills and video. Wells' photo essays have been published in Life Magazine, National Geographic, the New York Times Magazine and the Philadelphia Inquirer Magazine where his essay on the pesticide poisoning of farmworkers in California was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize. He is also a photo educator, with previous workshops at such institutions as the International Center for Photography in NYC and the Maine Media Workshop. David teaches workshops around the world, and he was featured in Photo District News as one of "The Best Workshop Instructors." He has launched an online educational tool with video podcasts and other useful information for photographers called "The Wells Point", at [thewellspoint.com](http://thewellspoint.com).*

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# **Narrative videos for storytelling photographers (a.k.a. taking the fear out of video)**

**David H. Wells**

As visual storytellers, we live in a golden age of new technologies. While much attention goes to imaging software, hardware options have similarly exploded, especially in terms of moving images. The kind of video production that once took an entire crew is well within the reach of any one man/woman band. This change is key in an age when visual storytelling has moved almost completely to the web, a medium that is built in motion and increasingly requires sound.

Photographers, who are expert at composing frames, come to video work with a huge advantage, once they get past their fear of video. This workshop builds on the photographer's advantage, their expertise in composing frames. To give them the tools they need to take their visual storytelling up a notch, to create brief, dramatic, visually compelling videos that maximize the ambient sound and the compelling visuals, while minimizing the talking heads. While I do documentary-derived projects, students are encouraged to do whatever type of video they want since the tools are the same for videos that are more Fine-Art, Narrative, Documentary, Promotional, for Kickstarter campaigns, etc., etc., etc.

## **Topics covered will include:**

- Lessons/issues in terms of gear emphasizing both stability and portability
- Shoot planning in terms of gear, subject matter, time of day, etc.
- Basics of time-lapse imaging to add energy to a project
- Outlines of contracts/negotiating usage fees and other business issues
- Dialoguing with client/subject to block out shoot and review rough cuts.
- Audio challenges and successes including music
- Editing/organizing video, audio and time-lapse media content

The ability to capture, edit and out-put videos is the key to the future for any visual storyteller, whether telling stories for others for money or for yourself for the love of it. In this class, you will make one video, working as a one-man (woman) band, gathering video, ambient audio, doing brief on-location interviews, creating time-lapse animations and gathering still photographs. We will then use some simple but effective editing techniques to turn the content into videos of varying length. Finally, we will explore the myriad of ways to use and then re-use those videos (or components thereof) to expand the reach of the video's message and to promote your skills/expertise.

## **Tools of Time Lapse Imaging with David H. Wells**

Digital imaging has given today's photographer an expanded toolbox of creative options, including the ability to create dramatic time-lapse animations incredibly simply. Time-lapse animations are produced by taking a series of consecutive photographs of movement, which, when put together, create the illusion of motion. This is compared to conventional video, where real time is captured and then played back "normally" as events unfold. The best time-lapse pieces take us out of the "here and now" experience of video.

In this workshop David will explore the important skills needed for good time-lapse pieces including:

- Camera considerations
- Format issues
- Image altering issues
- Conceptual issues
- Strategies in terms of viewpoints
- Image organization after capture
- Software considerations

In this workshop, students learn the tools of time-lapse animations and how to expand the single frame of a photograph into a more complex and evocative moving-image project that distorts time, and alters the pace of daily tasks. With the migration of media to the web, which is an incredible venue for time-lapse media, the skills involved in making time-lapse projects serve virtually all photographers well.

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## **The Humanistic Photo-Essay: Old and New with David H. Wells**

If a single photograph has the power to tell a story, then imagine what a body of work can communicate. For many photographers, after their skill level reaches a certain point, making a singular photograph can become unsatisfying. The multiple-image project, whether a personal endeavor or a documentary photo-essay, is the next step for the serious photographer. Join a master of the photo-essay, David H. Wells, to explore the magic that transforms loosely defined ideas into a powerful collection of images based on a theme, and tell a story through conveying the author's point of view

David will begin the lecture by showing his work and highlighting the different kinds of essays he has produced for different uses. Exploring such topics as globalization in India, the devastating effects of pesticides, and a photo documentary on a homeless family living in a school bus, David's work spans across many genres. In the last year David has expanded into multi-media work and this presentation will include examples of that work. Following the presentation, he will briefly explore how to write a proposal for a photo-essay, which is the first step towards funding, exhibiting and publishing a project.

This is a unique opportunity to learn the basics of a photo essay from a widely published/exhibited photographer and a two time Fulbright fellowship recipient.

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## **Mastering found light: Light shadow night and twilight with David H. Wells**

If photography is writing with light and everyone is a photographer these days, then the business should be overrun by masters of writing with light. Yet nothing could be further from the truth. Great photographers know that light is a tool just like a camera, lens or tripod and mastering that same light is a hard-earned skill. For studio photographers, the art is in controlling that light. Working in uncontrolled situations with found light is as much a challenge but is also rewarding when the light is used effectively. Differentiating yourself as a professional photographer is harder than ever these days with everyone claiming to be one. Learning how to master found light is one way to really do that.

David H. Wells will share his tools for mastering found light, experience that comes from decades of practice and decades of looking at light analytically. This seminar is more than a refresher in the basics, it offers a whole new way to look at and master found light.

Wells has repeatedly been called a master of light and shadow. His photo-essays on the light and atmosphere of different places have been published in general magazines as well as photography magazines. They have been exhibited in numerous exhibitions including one where a curator wrote of David's work saying "Wells uses light like a surgeon." His approach to light has been profiled on the web and in magazines such as Camera and Darkroom, Photographers International, Communication Arts Photography Annual, Photo Magazine and Phototechniques.

Wells likes to call himself a connoisseur of light (meaning a person who is an expert at something or has informed and discriminating taste.) Working in places like Israel, Guatemala, Bangladesh, India, Italy, etc., has given Wells the opportunity to critically analyze found light around the globe and to become a connoisseur of that light.

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## **Light Studies Exploring the Light Atmosphere of a Place with David H. Wells**

Certain places call out to us to be contemplated and explored. Whether they are a big city or a small town, public or a private space. Bodies of work that explore the light and atmosphere of such places are often called Light Studies. Light, shadow, night and twilight are the tools that David H. Wells uses as he makes his award winning "Light Studies." Train stations, shrines, city centers, buildings and the like are just a few potential subjects for such "Light Studies."

David H. Wells is a freelance editorial photographer who specializes in producing "Light Studies" on location, across the globe. His finished "Light Studies" have been published in general interest magazines as well as photography magazines and have been exhibited in exhibitions around the world. Spend time with this master of light and shadow who will help you understand how to make your own "Light Studies." Wells will share specific techniques (and particular images that highlight those techniques) that he used to create his "Light Study" photo-essays.

Topics to be explored include:

- Specific issues of time of day / morning vs. evening light
- Quality and direction of light
- Scouting a location with a compass to plot the play of light
- The importance of the photographer's position
- The use of lines, light and dark
- Lens choice / composition
- Framing to create dramatic images when no dramatic light exists

Attendees will gain a better understanding of available light, how it is shaped by the time of day, seasons, the photographer's positioning, etc.

*"Wells uses light and dark like a surgeon... His dynamic compositions have an almost surreal quality that reshapes our expectations of space. (He) uses light, carefully, to explore interior human complexities."* Charles Biasiny-Rivera, a curator and critic

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## **A week in the life of a professional photographer with David H. Wells**

This class is for those who are thinking of becoming a professional publication photographer, and want information about the business side. The fact is that talent as a photographer is only half of what you need to succeed. Skills as a negotiator, bookkeeper, researcher, record keeper, correspondent, writer, networker, etc. are as important as skills at making images.

Spend a time with David H. Wells, a veteran professional photographer, who makes his living solely through his photography. He walks you through a typical week in his life as a professional photographer. He covers estimating assignment fees, usage fees, resources for pricing, negotiating skills, and the various legalities and necessity of signed estimates, image usage licenses and contracts. David also covers self-promotion, marketing, and copyright law. He discusses when you need a model release and/or property release and what kind to use. He also covers the topic of taxes and what you need to know for sound financial practices.

Topics to be explored include but are not limited to:

- Business insurance, camera insurance, quarterly income taxes and sales tax issues.
- Researching, updating, purchasing and training for latest digital technology.
- Resources for keeping updated on pricing, evolving business practices, trends, etc.
- The various list serves to read each day to stay up to date on industry news, etc.
- Fine art galleries and corporate art dealers who sell photographs as art prints.
- Mentoring friends, students, etc. on business practices to keep the market viable.
- Research and attend exhibits as opportunities for creative and business stimulus.
- Garnering exhibitions for print sales, personal expression and career advancement.
- Understanding portfolio reviewing options, writing cover letters, artist's statements, etc.
- The basics of running a stock photography business.
- The importance of registering work with Library of Congress for copyright protection.
- The world of grants, from how to write a proposal to grant funded exhibitions/books.

This is a business class, which can be two or three hours long for intermediate, advanced/ aspiring professionals. Though Wells makes his living as an editorial and stock photographer, the skills he has developed apply to almost any kind of professional photography.

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## **The Career Path of a Photographer with David H. Wells**

The best way to get better at almost any skill is to study how others before you have mastered that process. This is true whether flying a plane, cooking a meal or making a photograph. The lesson most photographers want to understand is "How did the pro I admire get from being an aspiring photographer, to being an established professional?"

Each successful photographer's career path is different, so studying the career paths of many photographers is the best way to understand what they did along the road from the start of their careers(s) to their success. You should note that these questions apply regardless of what style or type of photography you do, whether portraits, photo-journalism, landscapes or nudes.

In this presentation David H. Wells will take you through his career path, where his photos have been shown on everything from newsprint to an iPad. From an aspiring photographer in high school to an award-winning, world-traveling photographer, David took a series of steps, which he will trace in this presentation. As he takes you through his career path, he will show you work from different phases of his career including newspaper work, magazine work, stock photography and fine-art work. Since 1986 David has worked full-time as self-employed editorial photographer.

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*David H. Wells is a photographer / photo educator in Providence, Rhode Island. He specializes in intercultural communications and the use of light and shadow to enhance visual narratives. He also focuses on photo-essays for publication and exhibition.*

*To produce his photo-essay on the pesticide poisoning of California farm-workers, Wells received the Nikon/National Press Photographers Association Documentary Sabbatical Grant in 1988 and a 1989 fellowship from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. His essay on the pesticide poisoning of farmworkers in California was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize*



To produce his photo-essay on the complex relationship between Arabs and Israelis, Wells received a fellowship from the MacArthur Foundation's Program of Research and Writing on International Peace and Cooperation in 1991 and a fellowship from the New Jersey Council on the Arts in 1994. In 1999, he spent five months in India on a Fulbright Fellowship at the University of Mysore, where he started his project on globalization in South Asia. A fellowship from the Alicia Patterson Foundation in 2001 and a Fulbright Regional Studies Fellowship in 2005 enabled him to complete that project.

Past editorial assignments have been for Life Magazine, National Geographic Publications and the New York Times Magazine to name a few. He has produced 16 photo-essays for the award winning Philadelphia Inquirer Sunday Magazine. He is a member of the American Society of Media Photographers (ASMP) and the National Press Photographer's Association.

Portfolios of his work have appeared in American Photography Four, Camera and Darkroom, Communication Arts Photography Annual, Graphics: The Human Condition, Photo District News, Photo Magazine, Photographers International and Zoom.

Wells has taught semester length classes as well as shorter, intensive workshops at the University of Pennsylvania, Syracuse University, the University of the Arts, the International Center of Photography in New York City, the Maine Photographic Workshops, and the Rochester Institute of Technology.

David teaches workshops around the world, and has launched an online educational tool with video podcasts and other useful information for photographers. It is called "The Wells Point", and the website is [http:// thewellspoint.com/](http://thewellspoint.com/).

In 2011 he was featured in Photo District News as one of "The Best Workshop Instructors." As an Olympus Visionary, Wells has been contracted by the camera company to produce images and provide feedback on new product lines.

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## **Every picture tells a story: The Personal Project: Soup to Nuts with David H. Wells**

While every picture tells a story and each one is worth a thousand words, certain photographs tell stories more directly, with more impact and emotion. David H. Wells has spent the last four decades telling stories with his photographs for publications, exhibition and organizations.

In this presentation David takes you through his career path, from aspiring photographer to internationally published master photographer. Then David will take you through his photo-essays, where he tells in depth stories through a series of images. David's photo-essays explore important political topics as well as places that David finds compelling.

Photo essays (also known as personal projects) can be compelling, dynamic, vivid mission statements of a photographer's work — every photographer should have a working knowledge of this art form. With that in mind, David will explore:

- Defining a personal project or photo essay, as in “to try out an idea from a personal point of view. “
- The best ones communicate an idea that others can understand without your presence or your explanation.
- Two kinds of photo-essays: Linear are unified by the evolution/character development of the people/group shown, or portfolio, which is unified by the commonality of location, topic, and/or stylistic approach to the photography.
- Narrowing a personal project to strengthen it.
- The importance of aligning your project with larger political and cultural themes to ensure wide dissemination of and interest in the work.
- How presentation format such as color vs black and white or pairings, panoramas, diptychs & triptychs, can strengthen the message.
- Mirrors and Windows: proposed by John Szarkowski, curator of photography at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1978 as an exhibit and book. Work that largely seeks to see the outside world is a “window” while work that largely reflects the subjectivity of the artist is a “mirror.”

- The importance of looking at projects that are similar to yours to see what others have done, to understand how did they define, execute, disseminate and position their project?
- Principles of proposal writing for photo-essays/personal projects.
- Keeping on track and motivated in doing your personal project by creating a calendar to set mile posts along the way to keep you motivated, moving forward and judge the success of the project.
- Importance of your network in executing personal projects.
- Summarizing a project via an elevator pitch, a short summary used to quickly define a person, product, service, and its value proposition which you should be able to deliver during an elevator ride of 30 seconds to 2 minutes.

David will end the presentation sharing resources for photographers interested in pursuing their own photo-essays.

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