



Edited by
Kurt Amsler
& Peter Symes



In contrast to color photography, black and white photography requires that you work primarily with natural light instead of flash

Text and photos by Kurt Amsler
Translation by Arnold Weisz

Even in the digital age, black and white photographs are still viewed as art. In this edition of my underwater photography series, I'll give you an introduction to contrast imaging.

All those fantastic colors you find underwater are still the main goal for underwater photographers. On other hand, the black and white medium gives you an great opportunity to get creative.

The black and white photographer has four different venues to explore. First of all there is, obviously, using black and white film. Secondly, you can use color slide film and convert the images into black and white after scanning. As a third option,

there is shooting in black and white mode using an underwater digital camera; and fourthly, changing your digital color images into black and white with your image processing software.

The difference between color and black and white photography lies less in what you are taking pictures of, and more in *how* you take the pictures. In contrast to color images where you always have to primarily consider how to use your flash in combination with the sunlight, black and white imagery requires that you work foremost with the natural light.

For example, if you have too much light, the foreground becomes too bright, the images too hard, and the faces of divers too pale. The keywords for good black and white photography are therefore: light and shadow.

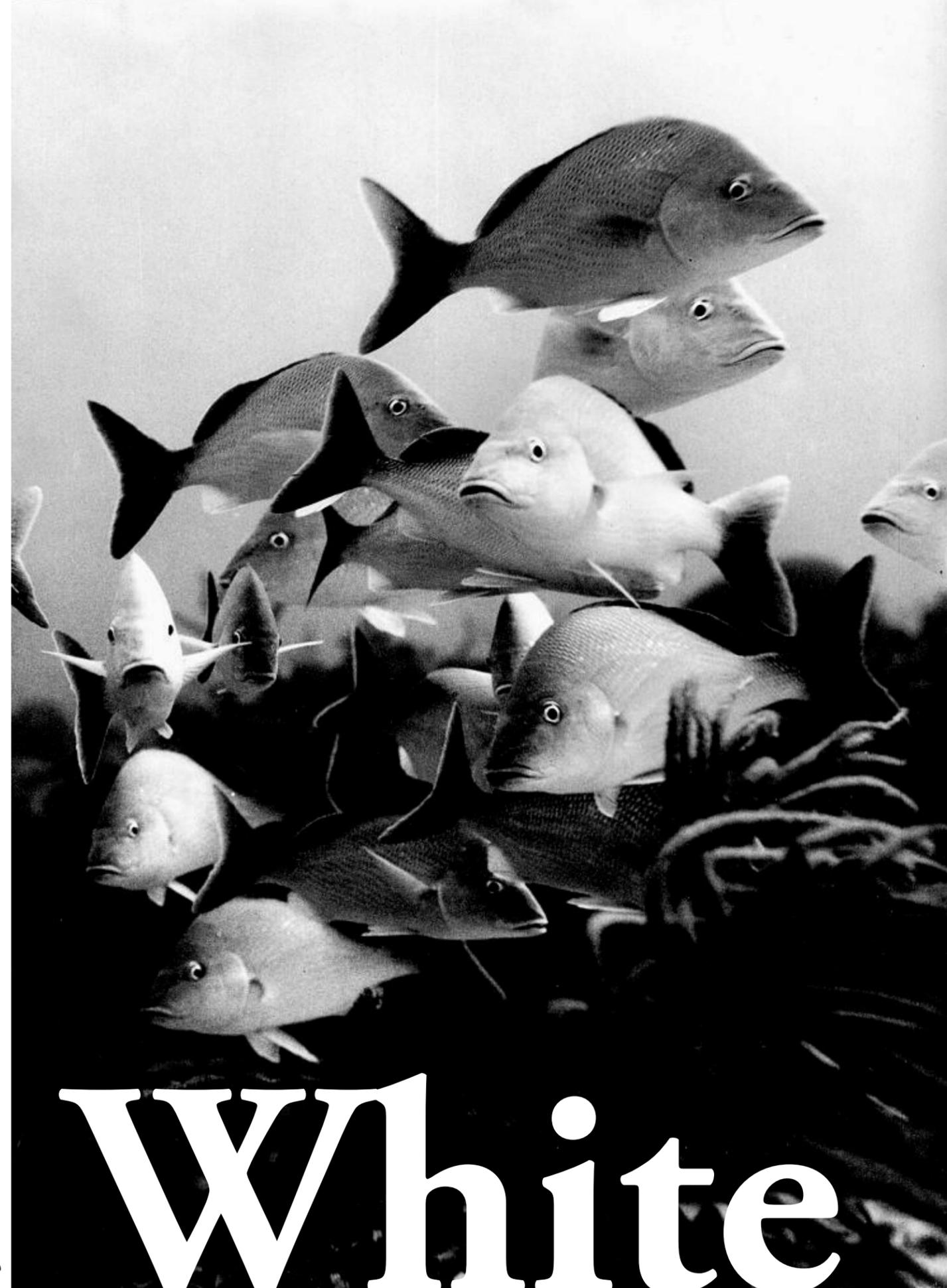
To be able to play with the light and shadow, you need to care-

fully observe your chosen subject from all sides and angles. Because different angles of incidence of a shadow in a photograph may have a completely different impact on the viewer.

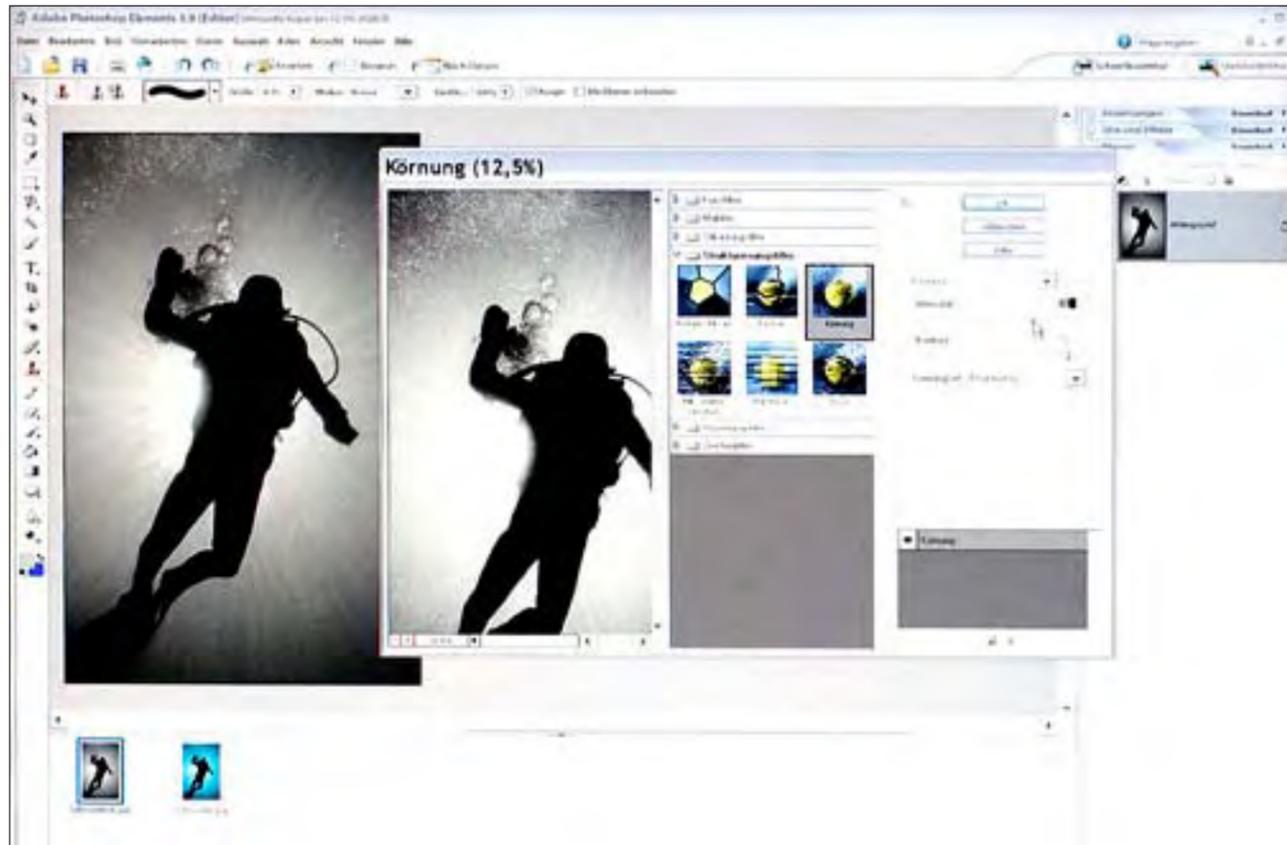
Also of importance is the choice of subject. Subdued color tones, which work beautifully in a colour image, will not have any effect in a black and white image. The keyword here is contrast. For a black and white image to work, you need sufficient contrast between the subject and the foreground or background.

In black and white photography, it is much easier to get the correct illumination by using the available exposure margins. For this reason, you can confidently work with the camera in auto mode.

Another tip is to set the shutter speed on automatic. The camera then chooses the correct speed according to the light conditions.



Black & White



Workflow

The result of your photography totally depends on how you process your negatives or digital images. The sensitivity of a black and white film is in the range of 100 and 200 ASA. A perfect negative is the basis for a good photographic enlargement. Therefore, you should always, if possible, develop your own images. The necessary technical equipment is not very expensive and can be easily obtained. To make your underwater black and whites better, try to underexpose by a third, and prolong the developing time by a third also.

The digital photographer doesn't need a photo print shop. Just preset your camera to black and white mode or take the pictures in RGB. In contrast to color images, you can now set the sensitivity to 400 ASA without any problems. The grains that often appear in color images with this setting doesn't affect the black and white images in a negative way.

To process your images, you should get software like Photoshop. Then, you can apply a huge range of effects,



Underexposing by a third and prolonging the developing time by a third helps make your underwater black and whites better. LEFT COLUMN: Digital photographers can preset cameras to black and white mode or take images in RGB to be processed later using software like Photoshop

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR BLACK & WHITE PHOTOGRAPHY

Black and white photography demands that you are very precise in the relationship between light and shadow.

Even though we see everything in color, you need to think black and white. Choose subjects that offer good contrast between the dark and the light.

A subject with a well defined structure and intense side light, like a wreck, offers good contrast and makes a dramatic impression.

Depending on how you angle the shot, the effect from the light and shadows will also change.

In black and white photography, flash is redundant. It will certainly always affect the natural light and make the subjects appear too strong. If the contrast is too strong, then you don't have any leeway when digitally processing your images.

The wide range of natural light available combined with the lack of flash, allows you to work with different aperture settings.

In contrast to flash photography, the shutter speed decides if your subject is not sharp. I therefore recommend that you don't go below 1/125 in shutter speed.

In a low light environment, you should set the camera at 300 ASA for 200 ASA film. Don't forget to apply this when developing the film. On digital cameras, set the ASA to 300 or 400. The better the camera, the higher you can go, e.g. 800 ASA.

Working with black and white digital files demands the same as colour files (jpg). Change as little as possible in the image. Because every time you change a pixel, the new data will diminish the quality.

If you don't like black and white, you can always use sepia toning to change the image into a classic brownish color.

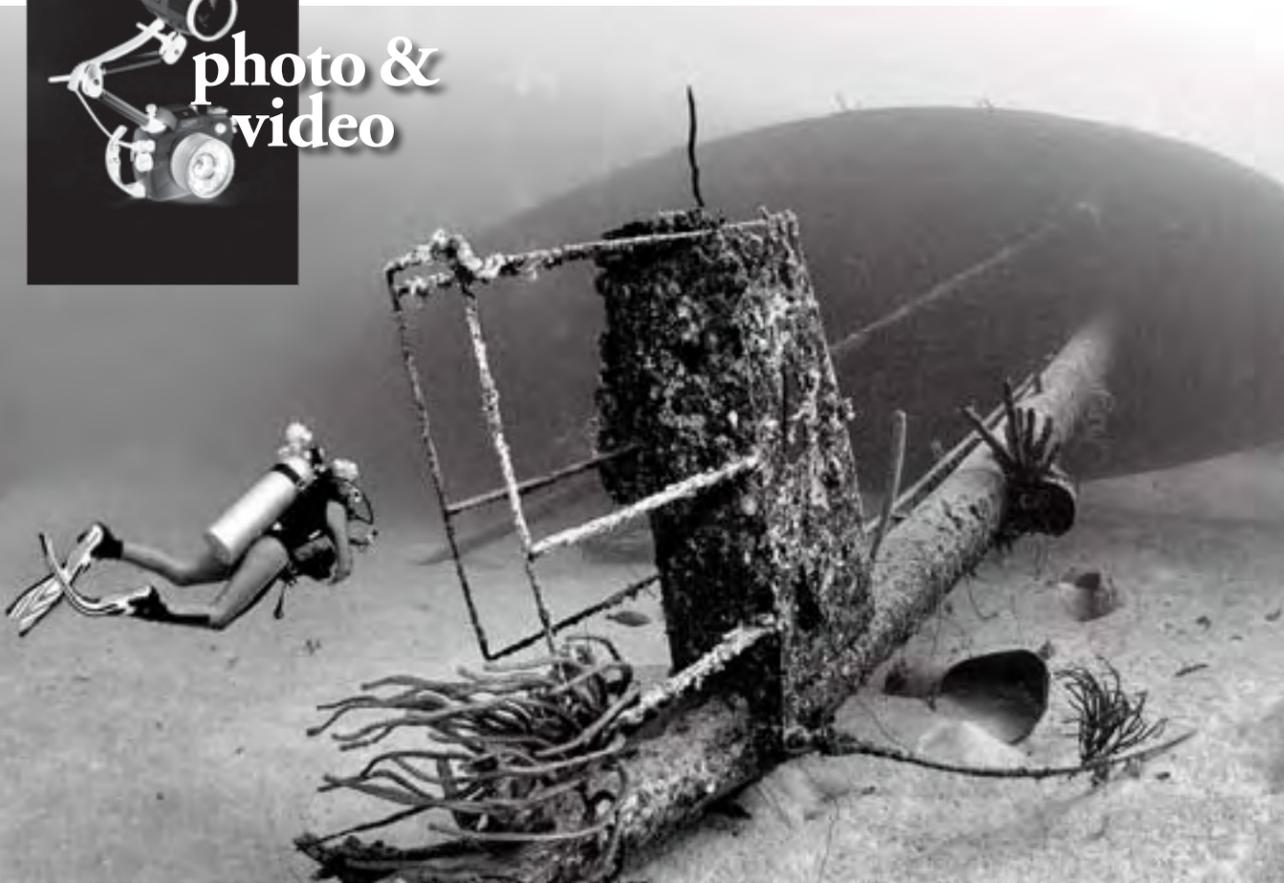
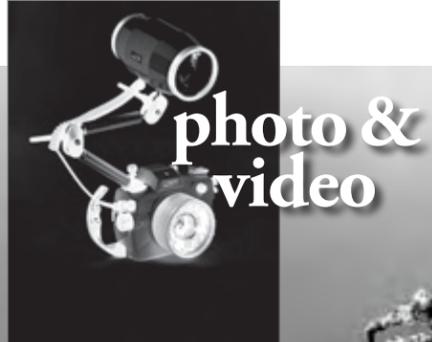
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Black & White

comes from the name of an artists' pigment made from the Sepia cuttlefish. Toning can be simulated digitally, either in-camera or in a later post-process. The in-camera effect, as well as beginner tutorials given for software like Photoshop or The GIMP, use a simple tint, which is usually a poor imitation. More sophisticated software tends to implement sepia tones using the duotone feature. Especially wreck images are nice when sepia toned.

For more information on Kurt Amsler and his photo workshops, please visit: www.photosub.com ■

which you can apply to your images such as grain size, contrast and resolution.

Try out different settings and combinations for the best result. Always work with copies and keep the original image untouched. Make notes of the settings you apply, for later use. When you have found your style, you then have all the necessary tools available and ready for other images.

Sepia toning

For those who like the old classic look on their images, there is the possibility of applying sepia toning. The term *sepia*



Special effects such as Sepia toning can be accomplished in-camera or post process using computer software like Photoshop or GIMP

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Ikelite for Sony a350

Ikelite has introduced a pair of affordable underwater housings for the Sony Alpha-series of Digital SLR Cameras. The clear polycarbonate construction enables unhindered visibility of o-ring seals and can be used up to depths of 60m. Controls are provided for every camera function and Ikelite's unique Quad-Ring seals ensure watertight operation. A full range of dome and flat ports is available to accommodate most macro, wide-angle and zoom lenses. www.ikelite.com.

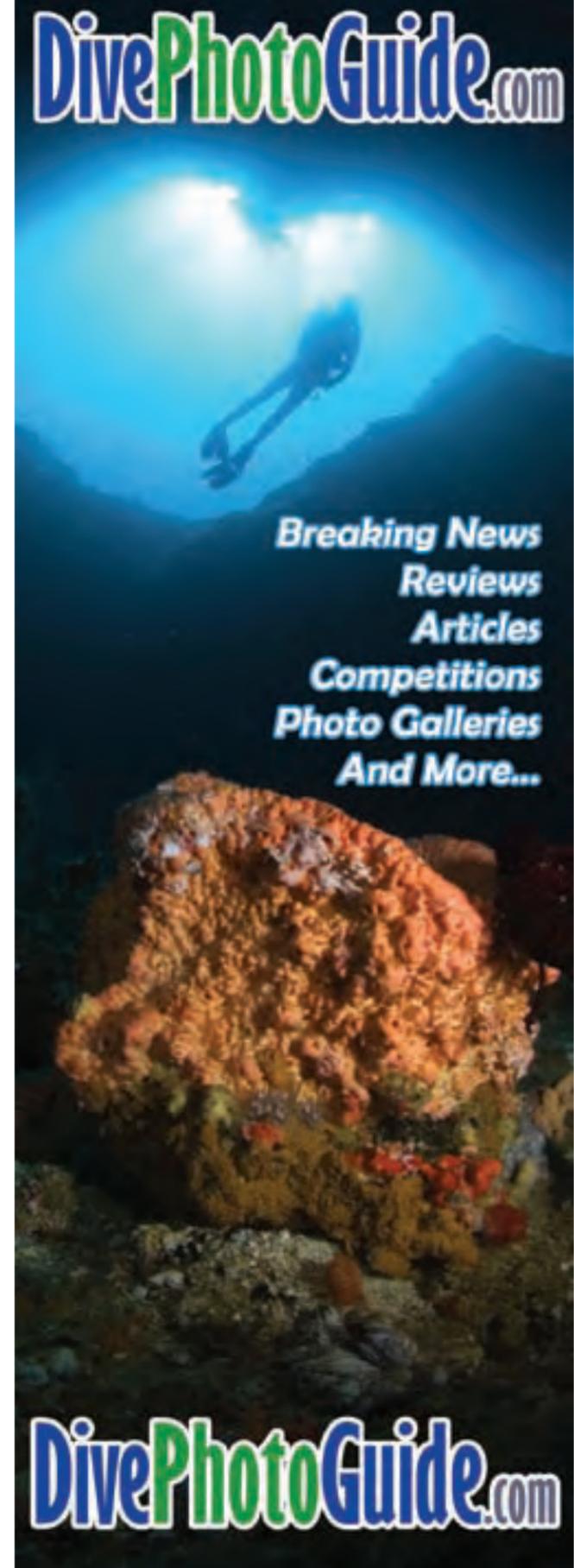


The Strobe Cover D/Z is made from neoprene for use on land and underwater to protect your INON strobe during diving and transportation. The Strobe Cover D/Z is exclusively designed for INON strobes. The side-slit design allows the strobe to maintain the same cooling characteristic as of a strobe without a cover.

The Strobe Cover D/Z has approximately 96g/0.2lb buoyancy underwater (the deeper you dive the less buoyant the cover becomes due to compression under pressure)

INON S-2000

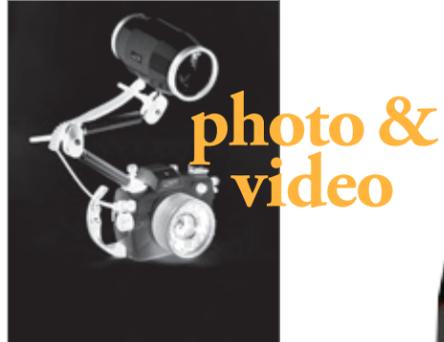
Inon INC has announced the release of its newest strobe, the S-2000. Billed as the world's smallest, the compact size utilizes four AA size batteries and is an ideal match for compact digital cameras and SLR's alike. The ultra sensitive slave sensor enables highly accurate wireless operation as well as wired capabilities using existing Inon optical cable connections. For further information, contact Inon America or an Inon America Authorized Dealer. INON America, Inc.
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Hugyfot have announced their upcoming housing for the Canon EOS 450D / Digital Rebel XSi. Hugyfot housings are milled out of solid aluminum blocks and can be used to depths of 100 meters. The lightweight construction allows easy one-hand operation. Available in July 2008, the HFC 450D underwater housing without port will be priced around 2000 euro.



PT-E05 housing for E-520

Customized for its new E-520 camera, the new Olympus PT-E05 housing is constructed from durable high quality polycarbonate and able to withstand depths of up to 40m. Underwater photographers will especially like the camera's Live View function, utilizing a large 2.7"/6.9cm LCD. Flash connectors allow the use of two UFL-2 underwater flash units. Five interchangeable lens ports are available including 8mm Fisheye and 50mm Macro. The E-520 and PT-E05 and will be available in summer 2008. Email info@olympus.uk.com

Sealife DC800

SeaLife's new DC800 8-megapixel camera comes with five new dive-specific color correction modes, the DC800 makes it easier than ever to take sharp, colorful underwater pictures. Set the camera to Sea mode to restore lost colors typical for underwater pictures. www.sealife-cameras.com



Amphibico Phenom Z7LE housing for Sony HVR-Z7U

The new Phenom Z7LE underwater video housing for the Sony HVR-Z7U HDV camcorder is now available from Amphibico. This electronic and mechanical combined housing allows complete camcorder control. Three port options are available, including a standard dome, flat port, and 94° wide-angle port. The introductory price, including a 2-year Amphibico warranty, is CAN\$ 4795. Ports are not included. www.amphibico.com



Sea & Sea YS-17

The YS-17 strobe is the smallest of the YS-series of strobes. With the unique TTL circuitry, you can shoot TTL images without complicated operations. Your compact digital camera meters the brightness of your subject and the strobe, through the TTL function, automatically controls the amount of light emitted for the correct exposure. In addition, the strobe can be switched from TTL to manual modes (full/half) and vice versa. Guide Number (land, ISO 100/m): 14. Beam Angle: 70°x 53° www.seaandsea.com

Light & Motion's Sunray 2000 Now Shipping

Light & Motion is proud to announce that the new Sunray 2000 LED Video Light System. Smaller and lighter than its closest HID competitor, the Sunray 2000 is the brightest solid-state underwater lighting system available to the consumer market with a remarkable burn time of 75 minutes on high. All Sunray 2000 light systems ship with memory-free NiMH batteries enabling 65 minutes of run time on high. The included charger can replenish discharged batteries in only 1.5 hours. Price: \$3799.00. For more information, visit www.uwimaging.com or call (831) 645-1525.





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Iceland's
Thingvellir

Text and photos by Peter Symes

Unique Dive Site



Where the world cracks open

As I slide out of the shallow basin and drag myself past the top edge of the drop-off, I find myself hovering in an empty void. Between me and the rock plateau far beneath me, I seem to have nothing but a clear space. It is almost disturbing. Aside from the feeling of drag when moving, it is almost impossible to detect the water we are in. Only the rising stream of bubbles from the air we exhale, gives any indication that we are indeed well submerged in some of the clearest water on the planet, if not *the* clearest. Visibility just seems endless, almost like air, making long distances difficult to judge.

We are in Lake Thingvellavatn on Iceland. In more than one sense this place is wondrous and mystic. Geologically, the Thingvellir area is part of a fissure zone running through Iceland, being situated on the tectonic plate boundaries of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. The faults and fissures of the area make evident the rifting of the earth's crust. In essence, we are diving in the part of the crack that opens up between America and Europe as the continents drift apart. The cracks and adjoining lake are filled by meltwater from glaciers some distance away, which passes through the porous underground and gets further micro-filtrated in the process. Apparently, there is nothing left in the water, but water. There is an almost magical blue hue over the scenery that could be taken out of science fiction movie. It looks like we are on some foreign moon. In our drysuits, our similarity with astronauts is not too far off either.

Cracks, crevices and holes are here and there—all





over the place.

Historically, this place has special significance. Major events in the history of Iceland have taken place here. It was at Thingvellir—which literally means “Parliament Plains”—that the Icelandic general assembly was established around 930 and continued to convene there until 1798. Today, Thingvellir is a protected national shrine. According to the law, passed in 1928, the protected area shall always be the property of the Icelandic nation, under the preservation of the Alting, the Icelandic parliament.

Thingvellir was declared a national park in 1930. Preservation measures at Thingvellir were modelled on the national parks that had been established somewhat earlier in the United

States to stem changes to the natural environment there resulting from encroachment by settlers. Iceland identified a similar need to preserve certain natural and historical sites for future generations to enjoy them in their original state.

In the last few decades, research has made it clear that Thingvellir is a natural wonder with the geological history and the biosystem of Lake Thingvallavatn forming a unique entity. Being able to witness the evolution and formation of new species in a place like Lake Thingvallavatn is of immense value.

The cracks and canyons in which we are diving, seem devoid of life almost sterile, though the lake body that they lead into seems different. It is not the

lake but these amazing canyons that are the points of attraction for divers who come to Iceland. Why? I guess the images give the best answer.

The first time I saw an image from Thingvellir was when I was a young diver in the 1980s and saw a promotional poster from *Waterproof* by Göran Ehlme, which featured Thingvellir. It was a classic dive poster that adorned walls in many dive clubs around the country at that time, but it made a lasting impression.

In my case, it took me about 15 years. It was worth the wait. No diving career will be complete without at least one visit to this magic place midway between Europe and America. ■

Jens Poulsen



P O R T F O L I O





Untitled #2, Oil on canvas, 60 x 80. Original sold.



Untitled #3, Oil on canvas, 195 x 195cm. Original sold.

Text edited by Gunild Symes
All paintings by Jens Poulsen. Photos of paintings courtesy of Jens Poulsen

PREVIOUS PAGE:
Untitled #1, Oil on canvas
180 x 180cm. Original sold

All paintings were created in 2007-2008

Since Danish painter, Jens Poulsen was voted Artist of the Year in Helsingør, Denmark, in 2003, he has been active in the Danish and international art scene, showing his fish paintings to all who dare to jump into the deep and explore.

The next time Poulsen's paintings will be on exhibit is at the big Copenhagen Art Fair in February 2009. Jens Poulsen is autodidact and primarily works with oil on canvas.

"I am attempting to capture a

coherence with my surroundings, a gathering of information/environment. Simplified in composition," states Poulsen on his website.

For more information or to order originals or fine art prints, visit the artist's website at www.poulsen-arts.dk ■



Untitled #4, Oil on canvas, 40 x 40cm. Original sold.



Untitled #5, Oil on canvas, 155x 155cm. Original sold.



Untitled #6, Oil on canvas, 140 x 140cm. Price: DKK16.000,- / US\$ 3320



Untitled #7, Oil on canvas, 120 x 180cm. Price: DKK 29.000,- / US\$ 6018
Also available as a signed fine art print. Price: DKK 450,- / US\$ 95



Untitled #8
Oil on canvas, 210 x 220cm
Price: DKK 39.000,- / US\$ 8094
Also available as
a signed fine art print.
Price: DKK 450,- / US\$ 95

Untitled #10
Oil on canvas
80 x 80cm
Original sold



Untitled #9
Oil on canvas
140 x 140cm
Original sold





The artist, Jens Poulsen



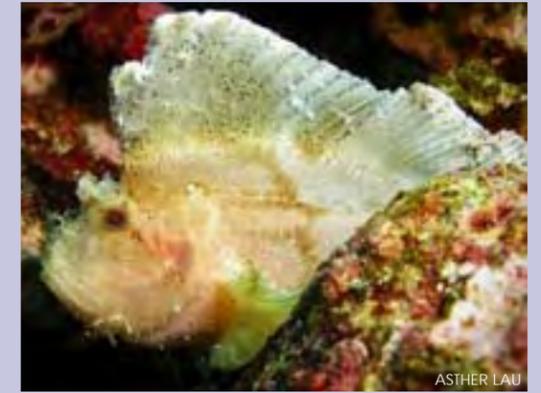
Detail of *Untitled #11*
Oil on canvas
160 x 160cm
Original sold



Seabass
Oil on canvas
270 x 160cm
Original sold

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