International Association of PANORAMIC PHOTOGRAPHERS
e-Monitor

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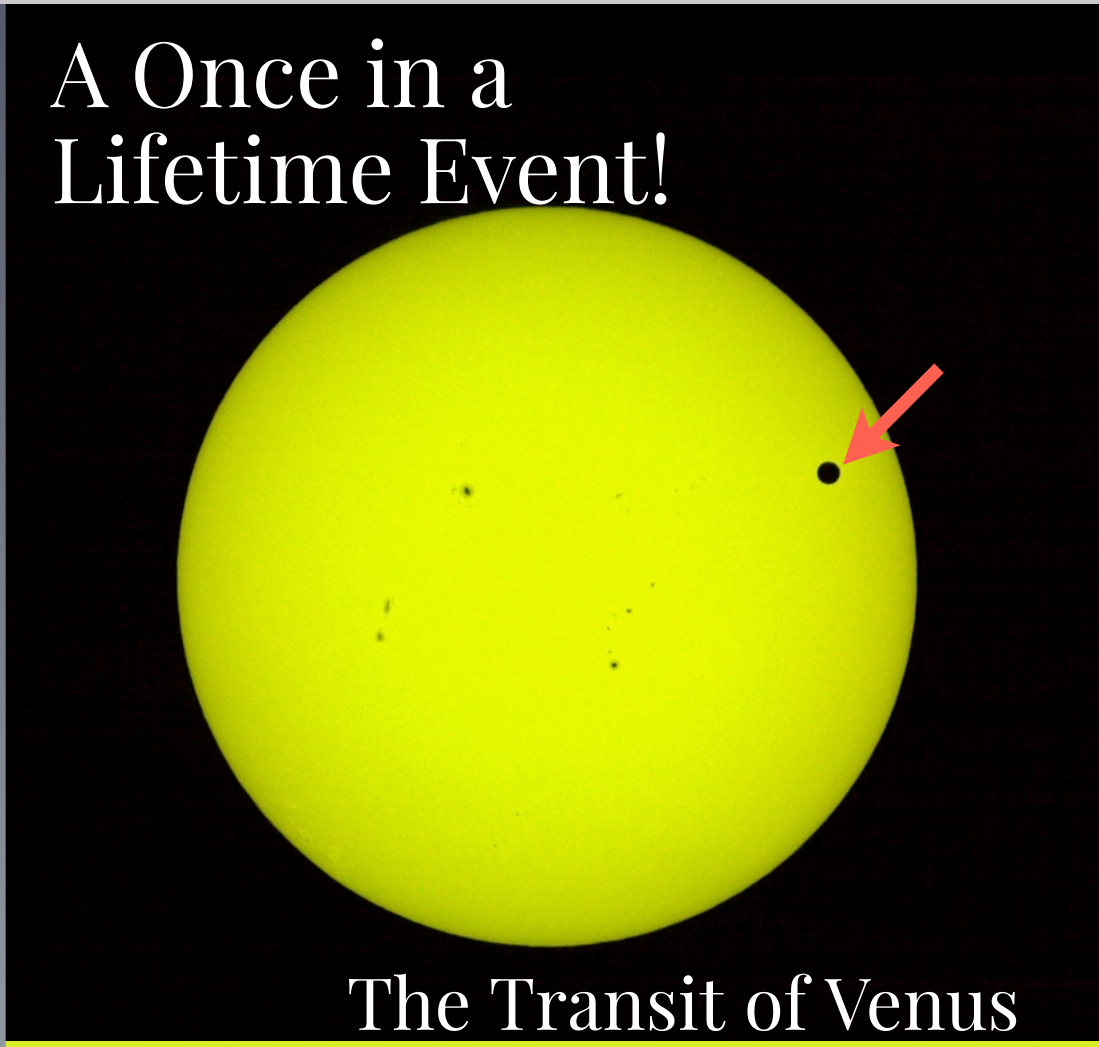
A Once in a Lifetime Event!



The Transit of Venus

On June 5th for many areas throughout the globe (June 6th in some parts) there occurred a celestial event that will not recur again until 2117 — a transit of the planet Venus across the Sun. On that date, from our location on Earth, the second planet from the Sun, Venus, appeared to traverse precisely between our planet and our star. This gave us a silhouette of that world slowly moving against the bright surface of Sol.

While this rare phenomenon occurred, it was not easily visible to the general populous due to the extreme brightness of the Sun and the danger that brightness posed to both equipment and to the human eye. No one in their right mind would ever normally stare at the Sun because of the extreme intensity it possesses. But when eclipses or transits occur,

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IAPP e-Monitor

The IAPP e-Monitor was designed to give our membership a quick look at what is going on with the IAPP and with panoramic photography in general. It was originated to give our membership quicker information while they await the release of the PANORAMA.

We welcome any and all articles and photos from IAPP members for inclusion into the IAPP e-Monitor. This is a publication for the IAPP, by the IAPP, and about the IAPP.

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6 inch f/12, 1800mm focal length
Refracting Telescope

people know that something is happening with the Sun, and the temptation is strong to quickly glance up in the hopes of seeing something impressive. Unfortunately, it only takes a fraction of a second for intense sunlight focused from a lens onto the eye to burn a hole in your retina and cause permanent damage from which you cannot recover.

This fear of damage to the eye often causes people to shun any type of viewing of events involving the Sun, but, with the proper equipment and common sense, these events can be quite satisfying and rewarding. Solar filters can be bought or made for nearly any size telescope or camera lens, thus giving you a safe method of seeing and recording these “once in a lifetime” events (google “Baader Solar Film” to locate suppliers). A Number 14 welder’s glass can also be used. For eclipses of the Sun a pinhole projection will show you the “bite” that the Moon takes out of the Sun but a transit of a planet really requires a telescope or telephoto lens to capture it adequately.

For the image seen in this issue I used a refracting telescope, with a lens 6 inches in diameter and a focal length of 1800mm, with a Herschel Wedge in the light path of the telescope that filtered 99% of the Sun’s radiation (light, infrared, and ultraviolet) from the Canon 5D camera and my eye. This allowed me to safely view and capture the image of the silhouette of Venus as it passed between the Earth and the Sun. The telescope was mounted atop an equatorial mount equipped with a motor drive that countered the Earth’s rotation and allowed the scope and camera to follow the Sun across the sky while I clicked off shot after shot to capture as much of the event that was visible from southern Texas before the Sun and Venus set below the northwestern horizon. The telescope’s “speed” is fixed at f/12 and most exposures were in the 1/400 to

1/500 of a second range. While you can estimate the correct exposure by checking the histogram on the DSLR's monitor the meter can easily be fooled by the bright disk of the Sun against a pitch black filtered sky. I found that, trying to get an accurate focus in the bright sunshine is also very difficult and I found a much better way of checking focus last month when I photographed the partial eclipse of the sun. I tethered my DSLR to my laptop and examined the image at 100% on the larger laptop screen and could tweak the focus of the telescope to get the optimum focus and exposure. To minimize vibrations I set the camera's mirror to flip up prior to clicking the exposure. Gaining experience with the tethered camera and laptop since the eclipse, I taped together several pieces of black foamcore material to make a shade for the laptop screen. This allowed me to easily see the details of the sunspots despite the brightness of the sunshine in the late Texas afternoon. With the proper focus, exposure, and mirror lockup, I could proceed to crank off image after image from before the transit started until the Sun and Venus were lost to an intervening cloud bank shortly before sunset. Unfortunately, planetary transits of the Sun are not conducive to panoramic photography so I apologize for posting non-panoramic photographs for this article.

Note: the other, smaller black "specks" on the surface of the image of the Sun on the front page are Sunspots. They are immense magnetic storms on the hot surface of the gaseous Sun. To offer a sense of scale, the black dot of Venus is about the same size as the Earth.

—Bryan Snow

Large Format Photography 101 — Part II
Shooting your first Photograph

In this issue we will devote some time to actual photography with the Large Format Camera. We will see what it takes to set up in the field and how to capture an image with a piece of film far larger than any digital sensor you are likely to come across.

Before we begin let's ask ourselves "Why would you use Large Format Film instead of a digital sensor?" The main reason is to capture an immense amount of data in an inexpensive and compact device. "Wait," you say, "A Large Format camera is neither compact nor inexpensive". But with used LF cameras and lenses costing less than $500 it is far cheaper than the least expensive DSLR. Granted, it is bulkier than a DSLR but, if you add a laptop to tether for focusing, and something like a tripad or folding table to hold the laptop, you are back to about the size and weight of a Large Format camera. And if you consider that a good DSLR has a full size 24x36mm, 21 MP chip and the least expensive Large Format has a recording area of 101x127mm or 4X5 inches, you can see that, for the price, the Large Format is a pretty good deal. It has been said that a medium format digital camera will give as good (if not better)

resolution than 4x5 film but, at a minimum of $10,000, that's 20 times the cost of a used Large Format camera. So, the Large Format is not a bad substitute.

Ideally, I would prefer to take the camera to a fantastically photogenic locale, perhaps the Tetons or Yosemite. But, when you live in south Texas you are limited to fields and what Texans refer to as rivers but what people in more northerly climates would refer to as creeks. North of San Antonio is an area known as the Hill Country. This area has great sunrises and sunsets and I used this area as my first test of the Large Format camera, and here was the procedure:

Texas Hill Country

1. I scouted the area for what I thought might make a nice photo.
2. I set up my Manfrotto tripod and attached the Cambo 4x5. The Cambo uses a 3/8 tripod socket and I have a Manfrotto quick-release plate attached to the camera and so placing it on the tripod is fairly straight-forward.
3. I went through the process of leveling the Cambo on the tripod. The tripod has a three-axis head with levels on the azimuth and altitude axis and this made leveling quite easy.
4. I proceeded to "set to zero or neutral" all the movements of the camera, including centering of the front and rear standards or the lens board and film holder in rise/fall, tilt, and shift. This doesn't take very long and is imperative for proper perspective.
5. I removed the lens cover and manually set the f/stop to its widest setting to get the maximum amount of light through the lens and onto the ground-glass. In order to see the projected image you must "open" the lens by activating the Preview lever. Once you push the lever to its open position the light can then travel through the lens and on to the ground-glass.
6. I proceeded to compose my photograph by draping the focusing cloth over the camera and using a variety of plastic clamps to hold the cloth to the camera and to keep the cloth wrapped around the camera in order to keep out stray light. This takes some getting used to but practicing at home helps a lot. One of the problems when you are under the cloth is to get your head and eyes at just the right distance from the ground-glass so that

you can see the projected image clearly enough to get a rough focus. This will allow you to compose your shot as best as you can. One thing you must get used to is that the image projected by the lens on the ground-glass is upside down and reversed. While this is quite different from the “correct” view you get from a DSLR, surprisingly, it is not that difficult to get used to. Some people even say it helps with the composition because it causes you to concentrate on the elements (line, shape, form, etc) of what is in the view rather than seeing them in a normal fashion.

This is also the time that you check the critical focus with a loop or any kind of lens that allows a close up view of the image on the ground-glass. Take the time to examine the four corners of the screen to make sure they are all in focus and that there is no vignetting from your focusing cloth or any other object that might be in the way. Once I am happy with the focus and composition I close the Preview Lever.

7. With the shot composed, I emerge from under the focusing cloth and concentrate on getting the correct exposure for the photograph. I use a Sekonic hand-held meter that can take both Incident and Reflective exposure readings. To go through the pros and cons of incident vs. reflective metering is beyond the scope of this article and, perhaps, if there is interest, we may save that for an article of its own. Regardless of how you make your exposure readings, you must manually transfer those readings to your Large Format camera’s lens. This is fairly straight-forward. If your exposure meter indicates that your properly exposed photograph should be 1/4 second at f/11, then you merely move the f/stop lever to its position over the mark at f/11, and slide the shutter speed lever to its position over the 4 mark. At this point I sometimes duck back under the focusing cloth to take a quick view of the image on the ground-glass at the exposure aperture of f/22. I trip the Preview Lever and critically examine the focus and depth of field and to see if any vignetting is present.
8. With the Preview Lever closed, it is time to place the film in the camera. I had previously loaded a film holder with two pieces of film, one on each side of the holder. I had marked the type of film in pencil on the two dark slides that cover each piece of film and numbered one side with the number “1” and the other with the number “2”. With the white side of the dark slides both facing out I know that both pieces of film are unexposed. Now, with the focusing cloth raised so that I can get to the camera back, I pull the metal frame that holds the ground-glass focusing screen back away from the rear standard (it is spring-loaded). In the resulting space I slide in the film holder so that the side labeled “1” is facing the lens. I release the ground-glass camera back and it presses against the loaded film holder, making the camera light-tight. Just in case there might be a light-leak, I drape the focusing cloth around the back of the camera. I, once again, check the exposure with my meter to assure that the exposure hasn’t changed due to a passing cloud, and check that the aperture and shutter speed is properly

set. I then press the Shutter Cocking Mechanism to ready the shutter. Finally, I reach under the cloth and unlatch the #1 dark slide and slowly withdraw the slide from the film holder. The camera is now ready and the photograph can now be taken.

9. With everything set, I can now squeeze the cable release and trip the shutter. The audible “click” tells me that the photograph is now “in the can” or, in this case, in the film holder. I now reverse the dark slide in my hand with the black indicator now facing the camera lens and I slide it back into position in the film holder and re-latch the cover on the dark slide. The photograph is now taken.
10. I usually remove the film holder from the camera back, turn it over and insert it back into the camera with the #2 side towards the lens. I will adjust the shutter speed down to the next slower position and take another shot so I will have two images to choose from, each with slightly different exposures.
11. With the photograph taken, I place the exposed film holder in a light tight container, remove and fold the focusing cloth, place the lens cover over the lens, and dismantle my camera and tripod and return everything to its place in my vehicle. While I am fairly confident that I have a good photograph, I am always a bit anxious until I get the film back from the lab and I see the good result. Here, again, is the difference between film and digital imaging. With digital you have instant knowledge and satisfaction when you take your photograph; with film, you play the waiting game.

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A BRIEF LOOK AT THE LARGE FORMAT LENS:

The Large Format lens is composed of several glass elements mounted around a metal leaf shutter. Many LF lenses are symmetrical in that they have nearly the same size and shape glass lens elements on either side of the centrally positioned shutter mechanism. There is no autofocusing mechanism, no flip up mirror, and no helical focusing ring on a LF lens. Instead, everything is manual, and everything has to be positioned by hand in order for you to take a properly focused and exposed photograph. The exposure is adjusted by moving the f/stop or Aperture Lever that widens or narrows the aperture blades within the leaf shutter mechanism. There is a marker on the lever that, as you move it clockwise, or counterclockwise around the central shutter mechanism, you position it at variously marked locations that mark the f/stops from f/5.6 (or faster) through f/45 (or slower).

There is also the Shutter Speed Lever that determines how fast the shutter blades will open and close to effect the exposure. This lever can be set by hand to facilitate shutter speeds from T (time exposure), B (bulb exposure), 1 (one second), 2 (1/2 sec), 4 (1/4 sec), 8 (1/8 sec), 15 (1/15 sec), 30 (1/30 sec), 60 (1/60 sec), 125 (1/125 sec), 250 (1/250 sec), and 500 (1/500 sec). The B (bulb exposure) is the same as in most cameras in that, when the shutter release is pressed, the shutter will open and, when released, the shutter will close. The T setting is no longer used on most cameras and was mostly used only on Large Format, Medium Format, and very old 35 mm cameras. When set to T and the shutter release is pressed and released, the shutter opens. To close the shutter you must press the shutter release a second time and the shutter will close.

Also, on the side of the lens, you will find a Preview Lever. Pushing this lever will open the shutter and keep it open while you compose your photograph on the ground-glass. Initial examination should be done with the lens aperture set wide open, but you can also examine the image and its depth of field on the ground-glass with the lens stopped down to the selected f/stop.

When it is time to take your photograph you must close the Preview Lever to close the lens's shutter. You must then push the Shutter Cocking mechanism to prime the shutter for release.

Lastly, the LF lens will have a Shutter Release Mechanism. This, of course, triggers the shutter to take the exposure. It is usually fitted with a Cable Release that threads into the shutter release mechanism and allows you to trip the shutter by pressing a plunger at the opposite end of the cable or by squeezing a bulb which extends the opposite end of the cable into the shutter release mechanism, thereby tripping the shutter.

(Continued from page 6)

Next month we will examine how and when to use the perspective controls (rise, fall, tilt, and shift), and why to use a Large Format camera for panoramic photography. Most of the controls on a LF camera work best for product photography in a studio and it is not often that you need them for landscape photography. Keep in mind that this entire series is being written from the perspective of a novice to Large Format photography, so if any readers have comments or corrections or expansion on the topic, please feel free to contact me at: bryan@snowprophoto.com.

—Bryan Snow

Review of photographic exhibit:

SENSE OF PLACE

European Landscape Photography

BOZAR Brussels — Belgium

Exhibition description:

Sense of Place is built around three key themes. The first of these is the concept of the national landscape, situated within the wider context of Europe. National and regional identities arise historically in part from a common relationship within a region and from the degree of dependence on that place. With its diversity of climate, agriculture, population density, and natural resources, Europe is characterized by enormously varied landscapes geologically, agriculturally and sociologically. The exhibition explores ways in which cultural differences persist despite the political and economic unity that now exists across national boundaries. The second theme has its roots in the wider debate surrounding the aesthetics of landscape photography and the concept of "place". Places gain significance through the stories that are told about them and through the manner in which they are represented. How does contemporary photography contribute to forming perceptions of our environment? The third and final theme suggests more philosophical approaches to the relationship between people and nature. Nowadays, many areas of Europe are highly urbanized, marked by legacies of Western industrialism and by the office, service and retail centres that characterize the post-industrial economy. We may have a less immediate relationship to the natural environment than our predecessors, yet images of nature continue to affect us spiritually and to influence and inspire our sense of identity; personally, nationally and regionally.

Sense of Place is the major exhibition of the new edition of the Summer of Photography. Landscape occupies a central position in the history of art in general and of photography in particular. How we see it today is affected by the ecological requirements of post-industrial society. Concern for the future has led us to reconsider our individual relationships with the environment and take a closer look at its place in our traditions and our history. Increasingly, we live less in the landscape than with it. *Sense of Place* looks at our

relationship with the environment in the context of European photography. Presenting some 160 works by 40 photographers from every member country of the European Union, the exhibition demonstrates the diversity of the European landscape. Divided into three major geographical regions – northern, central, and Mediterranean Europe – the works show how the natural environment has helped to shape identities. The photographers show that Europe is not just a political zone, but also a place with personal meanings for every individual.

I was disappointed after the visit of this exhibition where I hoped to find more truly panoramic views, as the theme was landscape.

The vast majority of photographs presented are in an almost square format, very few in elongated rectangular format and no one panoramic format as we do produce, except some in the work of Danish artist Olafur ELIASSON, who presents a repetition work of 40 small panorama pictures.

His blocks THE HORIZON SERIES (2002) of elongated images (but not really panoramic) use direct photography, within which light intensity is muted to emphasize similarities of the contours of the land.

Some photographers present juxtaposed square formats in order to match panoramic format as well as Ilkka HALSO (Finland) and Maros KRIVY (Slovakia), Massimo VITALI (Italy).

*One more time, the term of **PANORAMA** is again misused.*

— Michel DUSARIEZ,
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www.pano360.org/

and also to : www.pano360.org/underwater/

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One more time, the term of PANORAMA is again misused.

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