

Bokēh

The Art and Life of Photography

Volume 13

Featuring
Euphoria Photography
Norma & Roz Skinner

Don't Be Afraid
of Change
Monica Helsby

Follow Your Passion
Alyssa Morgan

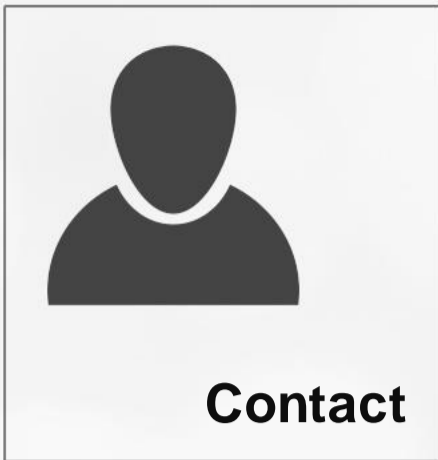
How To Process
Hundreds Of Images
by Harris Lim

Two Way Lens
Andrew Phelps
by Michael Werner
Working in Series
by John Bennett





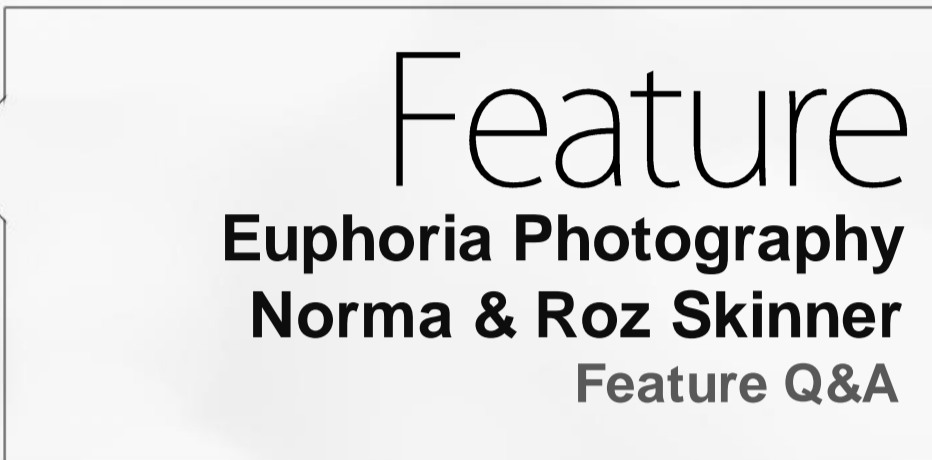
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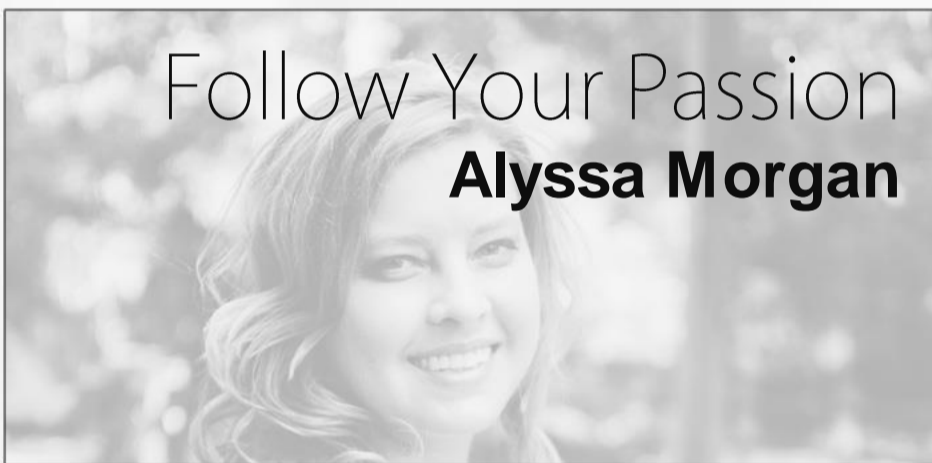
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Feature
Euphoria Photography
Norma & Roz Skinner
Feature Q&A



Follow Your Passion
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Two Way Lens
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Don't Be Afraid of
Change
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Don't be Afraid of Change

Monica Helsby

Interview by Harris Lim

With a combined twenty five years in front and behind the camera, Monica Helsby is a favorite in the mountains of North Georgia and the southeast. Her work has been published by commercial and business clients including wedding venues, mega-churches, top dentists, therapists, and lawyers around the nation. Her wedding photography skills have led her to brides all over the southern states.

Monica is the owner and head photographer at ZeroedN Photography. She is a third generation photographer and former teen model in the eighties. She recently had an image chosen by the National Geographic Magazine online editor as one of their daily dozen online photographs. Currently two of her photos are in the Shots13 gallery in Atlanta, GA. She is an award winning photographer who is known for providing unique experiences and locations to her clients year after year.



©Monica Helsby

Monica was born in St. Petersburg, FL and was educated at both the University of South Florida and Florida State University where she received her bachelor and masters degrees in education. She later attended Kennesaw State University and The Showcase School of Photography in Atlanta, GA to pursue a photography career.

Monica resides right outside of Atlanta, GA in the north Georgia mountains. She is married to her loving husband, Wayne, and has two crazy mutts named Penny and Pixel who keep her laughing daily.

Here is Monica's Interview:

Q. Tell us how you got started in photography.

A. My first glimpse of photography was in front of the camera while modeling in Miami Beach as a teen. I was able to meet various photographers from all over the world. I'd plaster my walls with fashion photos from the supermodels I'd meet and study the angles and poses. After college, a friend of mine admired my photography skills while on vacation. She asked me to photograph her upcoming wedding. I took 200 photos with a Nikon film camera I borrowed from my mother. The bride was my first happy client and now my best friend. A few months later I got my first SLR for my birthday and the rest is history.

Q. What type of commercial work have you done?

A. Clients who have published my work for commercial purposes include wedding venues, catering companies, lawyers, salons, dentists, an art therapist, churches, and several retail companies.



"Broken dreams" : A teenage looks over an old truck in the forest - Nikon D7000 - 50mm , f/1.8 - 50mm - 1/80 sec; f/2.2; ISO 800 - Early morning light, with extreme shade ©Monica Helsby

Q. How did you start "ZeroedN Photography"?

A. First I started dabbling in photography as a hobby, often photographing friends and family. Then I was asked to do jobs from time to time while working a full time job in education. I started taking classes about photography. I attended workshops and bought books. Only in the last few years have I worked full time in the industry.

Q. What is your main industry for "ZeroedN Photography"?

A. A majority of my business comes from commercial lifestyle or portrait photography. I've also found that many schools obtain my services because I have a Masters degree in education which can be a plus while interacting with children, administrators, and parents. During weddings I do more documentary style photography, anticipating tender moments that may arise.

Q. How did you grow your business?

A. Since I'm located in a small town it was extremely important to meet and gain trust of local clients. Word travels fast and furious. You can have all the talent in the world, but if no one knows you personally then many people won't call or connect with you. You must be a genuine person with a professional demeanor. One thing that has been extremely helpful is using high senior representatives. The high school girls and parents are great at spreading word to others through social networking and word of mouth. Social networking truly helped me in the beginning because it was free marketing day after day to different people from all walks of life. Each year I expand a little further to other cities nearby by marketing and using my senior reps to spread the word.



Q. Greatest hurdles you faced?

A. The largest hurdle thus far has been the effects of the economy. Many of my clients have seen their family members laid off or their place of business close up. When the economy is down then people often see photography as a luxury service, therefore often using the free person next door who just got a new SLR and no professional experience.

Q. How did you overcome them?

A. It's my job to be resourceful and find ways to sell even in a slow economy. This year weddings and schools are my biggest source of income, but last year it was the high school senior market. I watch current trends and watch online webinars to see how others are marketing, selling, and driving forward in this economy. You will find me mentioning my business almost anywhere I go. Referrals can happen when you least expect it.

Q. What are you doing now to sustain your success and grow your business?

A. Each year I see what is working best and what might work better. New ideas come to me easily. Most of my clients say that they want original locations and ideas. It's my job to provide that for them successfully so they come back year after year. I seek out new concepts and locations daily. I invest time in many of the middle and high school students' lives, even mentoring some of them and getting to know their interests. I have charity shoots for less fortunate teens or special education students who can't afford senior photos. As time goes on many of them will get married, have babies, and need family portraits. I'd like to be here capturing those moments for years to come.

Q. How important is networking?

A. Networking is extremely important, especially where I live. When I drive into town I may see a client or potential client in



"First Loves" : A client of mine wanted to show off her love for her boyfriend by getting a shoot together. I call myself a light chaser because I love finding it and showing off how pretty sunset can be. - 70.0-300.0 mm f/4.5-5.6 - 86.0 mm - Manual - No flash - at sunset - 1/250 sec; f/32; ISO 400 ©Monica Helsby



"Hide and Seek" : During a family shoot the youngest child started playing a hide and seek game. She flashed this funny face at her uncle. Nikon D7000 - Lens: 70.0-300.0 mm f/4.5-5.6 - Focal length: 180.0 mm - 1/160 sec; f/9; ISO 400 - Manual; Center Weight metering - Flash fired - Golden hour before sunset ©Monica Helsby

every store I visit. I've had a former high school senior refer me to a bride for a large wedding she was in after graduation. Keep in touch with your clients! I make time to comment on their social network photos of their kids and pets. It's not just because I want the business, but because I care about them too.

Q. How are you positioning yourself as a leader in this field of photography?

A. Leaders tend to stand out from the pack. Most of my clients tell me that one reason they choose my services over a competitor is because they want original ideas and they know I can provide that. Each session I try to provide a unique and fun experience that my clients say are worth every penny year after year.

Q. Were there people that didn't believe in your vision?

A. My parents and husband are both very supportive of what I want to do in life. I'm sure it shocked a few teaching colleagues and administrators when I left the field of education to pursue my dream.

Q. How did you deal with it?

A. Many of my former colleagues and student's families are my clients now. One of my first grade students came to me for his senior photos. That's very rewarding.

Q. Do you have mentors?

A. When I first started going to photography classes I met a photographer who had his own studio. He introduced me to makeup artists and models he worked with. These days I admire several professionals who do fashion and documentary photography, but I don't know them personally. I fell in love with Pamela Hanson's photography early on in my career. Her photos truly inspire me. Each one is a piece of art.

Q. How important are they to you?

A. I love learning from others. Whether studying a professional photographer's words or photos in a book or watching an online webinar, I find some of these learning moments to be very important.

Q. What are the top 5 things that you attribute to your success?

A. Customer service, hard work, determination, creativity, and support from family. I was lucky enough to start my first job at Walt Disney World, which has an amazing training program regarding customer service. They teach you to smile and be courteous even on days you may not feel like it.



Q. Where did you find good people to work with you and for you?

A. In the past I have used close friends who have a good eye and have talent in the field. I've also used former clients and family members to help with particular parts of my business.

Q. What do you recommend to someone getting started in the photography business?

A. I would tell them exactly what two people told me in the beginning: get an education first. Find a digital 101 class and spend the money to learn about your profession before diving into the sea of photography. Buying the latest and greatest camera doesn't make you a pro.



"Pucker up" : Nikon D7000 - 70.0-300.0 mm f/4.5-5.6 - 70mm - 1/250 sec; f/4.5; ISO 400 - no flash - manual - At sunset ©Monica Helsby

Q. What is something you wish someone told you earlier about the photography business?

A. So much of this business is way more than just shooting. It's also about marketing, customer relations, editing, and paperwork. In addition, be very careful whom you trust. This profession can lend itself to tough competition and sometimes that means not everyone is as nice as you. Make sure you sign contracts, get model releases, do your taxes, and get yourself a business license.

Q. What is your opinion on equipment and all the new digital cameras coming out these days?

A. Honestly, I know photographers who live for new cameras and the specs on every piece of equipment. I've sold photographs that I have taken from my iPhone and from an old point and shoot. Sure I think that a good SLR helps me get a great shot and a fast lens can be a major asset in a low light situation, but I'm not fascinated with it like some are. I'm more impressed with moments and capturing them with what I have.

Q. What do you do to keep yourself inspired?

A. My daily inspiration comes from nature, God, music, my love of people and their expression of it to each other, and other people's art. I'm a passionate person who has always been enthusiastic about the arts.

Q. Who do you look up to?

A. I look up to photographers that go on unique expeditions to capture real life events. This would include documentary photographers who show us the human condition in the world. I've seen both nature and portrait photographers who use



their talents to show what life is like in unique circumstances. This would include things such as orphanages, human trafficking, homelessness, and endangered rainforests. These photographs move me to want to take action and make the world a better place.

Q. How important is having goals to you?

A. Each year I come up with a list of goals. I may not reach them all, but it's always fun trying.

Q. What equipment do you use?

A. I have two Nikon D7000's, two alien bees, a Manfrotto tripod and various other lenses and photography toys. I sure do love my telephoto and fisheye lenses.

Q. Tell us about your process.

A. For shooting it includes connecting with my client, then putting them in front of an amazing background, and finally capturing an emotion or mood.

Q. What type post processing do you do?

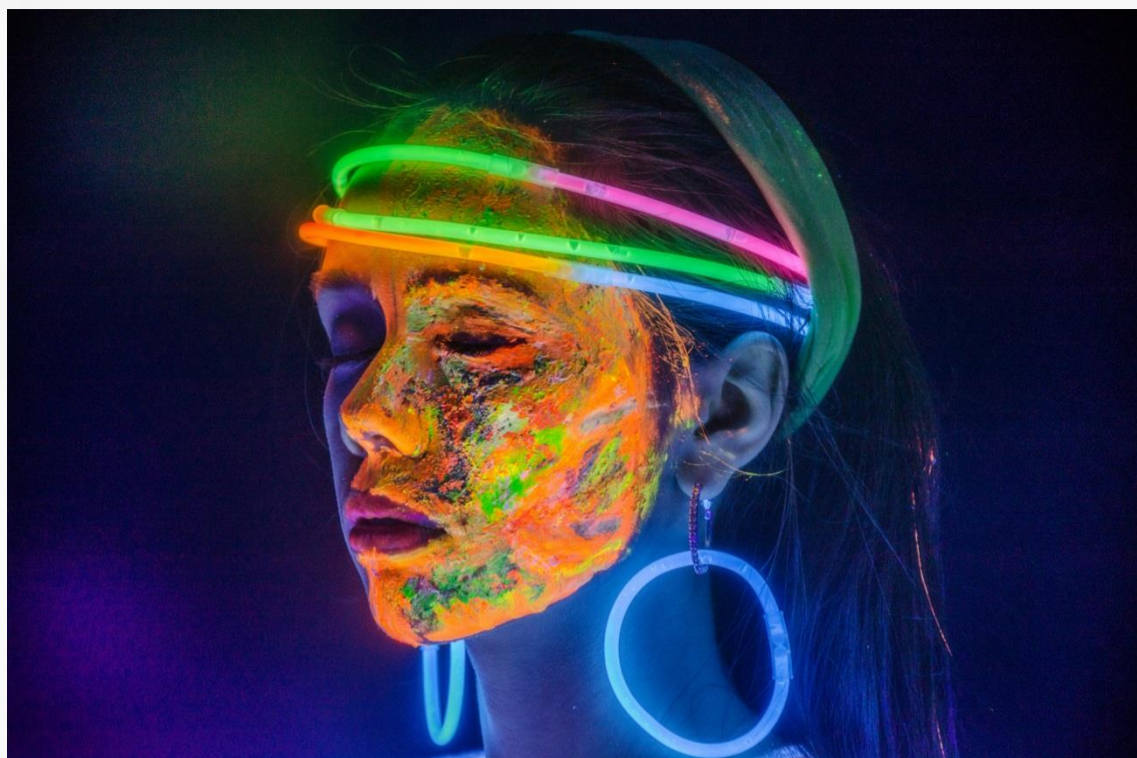
A. It's usually a four-step process: download, culling in Lightroom, Photoshop, then print. I'm a big fan of Apple and Epson products too.

Q. What camera do you have just for fun or everyday photos?

A. I use my iPhone and a Pentax waterproof/shockproof camera that I've taken some awesome artistic photos with.

Q. What is your opinion on video capabilities on DSLRs

A. This is what I'd like to jump more into next year actually. I'm asking for some video editing software for Christmas. I spent so much of my childhood directing my own videos with friends and family. This is right up my alley.



Girl with Glow Necklace : Nikon D7000 - Conditions: blacklights around girl, dark studio - Focal length: 90mm - Exposure: .8 sec, f/5.6, ISO 160

Ballerina Dancing : Nikon D7000 - Lens: 18.0-105.0 mm f/3.5-5.6 - Focal length: 18mm - exposure: 1/250 sec; f/14; ISO 400 - Shutter priority - golden hour before sunset

©Monica Helsby

Q. Do you feel the industry is moving to all motion?

A. No, I don't feel that way. There is something about film and digital photography that still excites people.

Q. Where do you feel the industry will be in the next 5 years?

A. Higher Megapixel cameras and phones will continue to dominate the industry. I think the capabilities of the cameras will get more interesting as time goes on too. It's exciting to think about what they will add next.



Q. Anything else you want to add??
A. One way I stay up to date on the latest social networking is by asking the teenagers what apps they have on their phones. These days most teens are turning to Instagram, Vine, and Twitter; some of them rarely using Facebook anymore. When I market my photos online I make sure I post on many social networks and even add to Pinterest as well.

To learn more about ZeroedN Photography please visit the following sites:

<http://zeroedn.com>

<https://twitter.com/ZeroedN>

<https://www.pinterest.com/ZeroedN/>

<http://instagram.com/zeroedn>



"Yes, I do!" : The groom was an active army serviceman. He had the idea of using his gun in a unique and hilarious way. The preacher wasn't told to make a face, but when he did I captured this amazing moment. Nikon D7000 - lens: 18.0-105.0 mm f/3.5-5.6 - Focal length: 62.0 mm - 1/250 sec; f/5.3; ISO 400 - Flash fired - Rainy and overcast conditions, early evening ©Monica Helsby



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