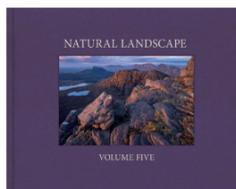




Jurassic World by David Shaw, winner of the 2025 Natural Landscape Awards' Intimate Landscape category © David Shaw

OUT THERE EDITED BY CLAIRE BLOW



BOOKS
NATURAL
LANDSCAPE
VOLUME 5
Natural Landscape
 Media, Hardback,
 \$70 (approx £52)

The Natural Landscape Photography Awards has established itself as one of the leading photographic competitions. Set up in 2021 by four landscape photographers – Tim Parkin, Matt Payne, Rajesh Jyothiswaran and Alex Nail – the awards offer a platform for honest and naturalistic depictions of the landscape. Creativity is encouraged, but only very subtle image editing is allowed.

The latest competition has brought to

light another exceptional set of photographs, and these are collected in a beautiful new hardback book. *Natural Landscape Volume 5* spans 220 pages and includes the work of 128 photographers whose images speak of a deep connection with the landscape. As well as stunning single shots, there are numerous projects and series that allow for deeper contemplation. These include overall winner Joy Kachina's studies of native Tasmanian trees, Magnus Reneflot's drone shots of frozen landscapes and Theo Bosboom's Flowerscapes, taken from a bug's-eye perspective.

In addition to the superb images, the book includes several thoughtful essays by some of the winning photographers. It's a must-have for all landscape connoisseurs and

one that will provide endless inspiration.

OP readers can get a 15% discount on any of the Natural Landscape books, including bundles. Enter the code OPNLPAT5 at checkout.



SILENT SNOW:
HOKKAIDO
 Elizabeth Sanjuan
 Daylight Books
 Hardback,
 £35.99

Hokkaido, Japan's northernmost island, has become famous in the photography world. A dream location for those with an eye for minimalism, its landscapes are rendered pristine white by Arctic winds and constant snowstorms for six months a year, leaving trees, fences and other objects starkly isolated.

It is a frozen wilderness photographer Elizabeth Sanjuan has returned to several times over the last seven years. The simple, quiet scenes and limited tonal range have allowed her to create soulful images that employ a clever use of form and framing that highlight unspoken emotional elements within the landscape.

As art curator Reiko Itabashi writes in the book, 'The interplay of shadow on snow, the subtle gesture of a branch, the soft fracture of ice – these are not just visual elements but emotional ones. They speak of endurance, of quiet resilience, of a beauty that does not clamour for attention but waits to be found.'

Environmental protection is a theme that runs through many of Sanjuan's projects and is evident in *Silent Snow*. The 40 images in the book may be understated, but they carry a strong message about nature's fragility and allow space for contemplation.



Windswept by Elizabeth Sanjuan © Elizabeth Sanjuan

NATURE BLOGS

Here are three nature and photography enthusiasts who have plenty of wisdom and ideas to share about connecting with the wild...



KATE MACRAE

Wildlife enthusiast and educator Kate MacRae, best known as WildlifeKate, is passionate about helping others to connect with nature. She is currently working to transform her property in South Wales – a three-acre plot of land – into a nature haven. You can follow her journey through her live streams, videos and photographs via her website and on Instagram and YouTube.

» wildlifekate.co.uk



CAROL LEATHER

Carol Leather has been fascinated by nature and photography since childhood and loves to explore the birds and other wildlife of her local landscapes in eastern England. On her website she shares nature walks in some of the best locations the region has to offer, from ancient woods in Northamptonshire to Yorkshire's towering sea cliffs, as well as wildlife photography tips.

» naturewalkswithcarol.com



ROBERT CANIS

Kent-based pro photographer Robert Canis is never happier than when immersed in nature. Through his images he seeks to convey his thoughts and feelings about the places and subjects he shoots. On his blog he shares his stories, techniques and musings on nature and photography. Elsewhere on his website you can view his latest work, including his long-term project on Leeds Castle.

» robertcanis.com



© Claire Thomas

FIVE MINUTES WITH... CLAIRE THOMAS

We chat to award-winning Welsh photojournalist Claire Thomas about her new book, *Altai: Hunters and Herders of Mongolia*

Claire Thomas has photographed some of the most important stories of our times, from the refugee crisis in Europe to the battle against ISIS in Iraq, contributing her images to leading publications such as the *New York Times*, the *Sunday Times* and *National Geographic*. Her deep interest in humanity, and in particular people's relationship with the natural world, has taken her time and again to western Mongolia, where she has built a body of work documenting the lives of Kazakh herders and eagle hunters.

You grew up in a village near Carmarthenshire. What led you from the Welsh valleys to the dramatic landscapes of Mongolia?

Growing up riding horses in rural Wales shaped so much of my life, but for me horses were a passion – something I was fortunate to have, not something essential. I'd long been curious about cultures where horses aren't a luxury but a lifeline. That curiosity, and a lifelong love of horses, is what first drew me from Wales to Mongolia. I wanted to learn from communities where horses are central to daily life, work and identity. In the Altai, I found exactly that.

Can you tell us about the technical and creative challenges you had to overcome in such a wild and remote region?

The extreme weather poses the biggest technical challenges – at -30°C, batteries drain quickly, so keeping cameras warm and charged becomes a constant task. Moving between sub-zero temperatures outside and the warmth of gers [yurts] heated by stoves can also cause condensation inside the camera, clouding the lens and fogging the sensor. The only real solution is patience: letting the equipment acclimatise and being prepared. Light can be difficult too, ranging

from harsh midday sun to the dim glow inside homes, so being able to adjust exposure quickly and instinctively is essential.

Creatively, the challenge is capturing intimate moments without disrupting them. Building trust, slowing down and spending time without the camera allows scenes to unfold naturally and keeps the work grounded in honesty and respect.

Before this latest project, you spent three years covering war and humanitarian crises in Iraq. Did the experience change your outlook and consequent work in Mongolia?

My years in Iraq profoundly shaped how I see the world and inevitably influenced my work in Mongolia. After witnessing so much suffering, violence, loss and displacement, I found myself drawn to stories rooted in resilience, community and everyday life.

In the Altai, I became more attuned to quiet moments – small gestures of care, the rhythm of daily routines, the intimacy of family life. Photographing in Mongolia allowed me to slow down, reconnect with gentleness, and shift my focus from urgency to presence. It didn't erase what I experienced in Iraq, but it helped me find balance and a different kind of meaning in my work.

What can we learn from Indigenous communities such as the Kazakh people?

Kazakh herders have an extraordinary ability to live in rhythm with their environment. From them, we can learn resilience, resourcefulness and a deep respect for nature. Their way of life is built on interdependence – with the land, their animals and one another.



***Altai: Hunters and Herders of Mongolia* by Claire Thomas is published in hardback by Hemeria, price £45.**