Featured Photographer: Doug Orton

Accomplished and internationally published, our featured photographer, Doug Orton hails from the Seattle-Tacoma area of Washington State. Though he had given photojournalism a try earlier in his life, it wasn't until 2009 that he decided to tackle photography full time. In 3 short years he's come a long way. Not only is he represented by Spaces Images and Alamy, but just this year he's also won first place in the International Conservation Photography Awards, which exhibited at Seattle's Burke Museum in June, and has been juried to exhibit at the Center for Fine Art Photography in Fort Collins, Colorado.

WHAT QUALITIES TO YOU LOOK FOR WHEN COMPOSING AN IMAGE?

DO: A few years ago I was shooting in Joshua Tree with two amazing senior women with life-long careers in the arts. When I'd want to interrupt their discussions of the mating habits of zebra and salmon to capture a scene, these wonderful mentors would have to fit, refusing to let me shoot until I "learned to see the light". Now, light is always first, indoors or out. Depth and line come next.

DO YOU ALWAYS KEEP A CAMERA WITH YOU?

DO: Yes! Nearly all of us carry a cell phone. Having nicked the lens of my G10, I'm between point and shoots or it would be in the van. Whenever I'm out of my daily, home turf routine I carry at least a minimal kit. Given choice, I prefer to plan a shoot.

ARE YOU A PHOTOSHOP WIZ?

DO: It wasn't long ago I considered Photoshop the path to the devil. Now I rely on it. While I prefer to get it right in camera and still work for the right shot versus many exposures, there are times when the composition is there but nothing else is, or everything else is there but the composition isn't, or Spaces Images asks me to correct right angles….. again! So post it is.

WOULD YOU TELL US ONE OF YOUR MEMORABLE SHOOTING EXPERIENCES?

DO: From mountain tops to inner sanctums, there are times when I'm so taken with the subject that I feel it to the bone. I rarely forget what I've seen through a lens, while I easily forget about anything else! I'm touched when a photograph conveying my personal concern for the environment finds prominent display.

WHAT DOES BEING A PHOTOGRAPHER MEAN IN YOUR LIFE?

DO: Tough and personal question. It means I have come full circle, surviving a good deal of hardship to reconnect with life. And it means my wife has more patience than I do.

WHAT GOODIES DO YOU KEEP IN YOUR BAG?

DO: I carry less and less, yet I lug more and more. I've recently changed from a large bag or pack to a messenger bag carrying a two-lens kit to support the planned shoot. A hard case with whatever I might need stays handy in the van. In my bag I always carry business cards and blank release forms. A hot shoe level and remote release are my current must haves. Filters, a handful of lens cloths and a blower see the most use. A small first aid kit has proven useful

To view Doug's work, please go to his website here.