



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Doug Chinnery

With his trademark concentration on coastal landscapes and a rare determination to shoot in all conditions, Doug Chinnery is literally a photographer for all seasons. Nick Smith puts him in the spotlight...

DOUG'S TOP TIPS

- » I never go on a shoot without... a huge chamois leather. It's the perfect rain cover. I can wrap lenses in it, dry kit down with it and use it as an old-fashioned photographer's dark hood to see the monitor clearly.
- » My one piece of advice is... go out in bad weather. Photographers always say 'it's all about the light.' I don't believe that. Composition is the key and there's no such thing as 'the wrong kind of weather.'
- » Something I try to avoid is... seeing the world as others see it. I just don't want to churn out what everyone else is churning out.

NICK SMITH Your work always seems to come back to the theme of the coast. Why is this?

DOUG CHINNERY For someone who lives as far away from the coast as is possible in the UK – north Nottinghamshire – this may seem a bit odd. But for a landscape photographer there are always images to be made by the sea. The sea just has a pull, doesn't it? I tend to like images that are minimal, and the ocean gives you scope for that. It means that I don't have to include too much in the frame.

NS Do I detect the influence of Chris Friel, here? He doesn't take conventional images...

DC That's one of the things I love about his work. He made me see that you don't have to look at the landscape in a traditionally way. When I first started, I was trying to see the world in a very real way, looking for absolute beauty and perfection, front-to-back sharpness, showing the landscape in all its glory. Chris Friel's work made me realise I haven't got to do what others are doing.

NS In what sense do you feel a photographer can be an artist?
DC I'm more interested in emotion than beauty. So much landscape photography today is very beautiful and derives its impact from the light and the location. But these images can quickly fade and lose their interest. Something that is more artistic and creative can be revisited and there's always something new to see.

NS You are a big advocate of 'lo-fi' kit such as pinhole cameras and mobile phones...
DC I'm not interested in sharpness, megapixels or resolution. I purely view kit as a set of tools to do the job. Recently, I was at Glastonbury Tor and sure the big DSLR came out of the bag.

left Winter storm, Dungeness, Kent
right Stormy sea, Whitby, Yorkshire
below Stand of trees near Wentworth, Yorkshire



But at other points, because of the weather and the subject, I used a wooden pinhole camera. Likewise, if an iPhone can give me the look and feel that I want, that's all I'm interested in.

NS When do you get your best images?
DC I like to go out into the field when it is grey and windy, stormy and miserable. That's when the magic happens. That's when you will see and capture things that most photographers miss because they're at home editing on their computers.

NS What's the 10,000 hour rule?
DC I can't claim to be the originator of this. But the idea of the 10,000 hour principle is that to become an expert in anything, that's how much of your life

you have to put in. This is what I try to convey in my workshops. Every now and then someone will click the shutter and something amazing will happen. But most of the time we achieve what we do through hard graft and messing things up from time to time.

NS Like the golfer who claimed that the more he practised the luckier he became?

DC Absolutely. Experience teaches you how to be in the right place at the right time and how to use the kit without thinking about it. This is what frees the mind. n

To see more of Doug Chinnery's photography visit doughinnery.com

DOUG'S CRITICAL MOMENTS

Late 1970s I went to London Zoo with my Lubitel medium format camera and took a picture of an elephant's eye. This showed me there was a different way of looking at things.	2006 I took a panorama of Eilean Donan castle between storms. That taught me the value of shooting in bad weather. A real epiphany.	2009 First seeing Chris Friel's work showed me that there is life beyond reality, beyond sharpness.	2010 John Langley of the National Theatre chose one of my images in the Landscape Photographer of the Year competition.	2011 First solo exhibition: 'Time Passing.' All images were taken with an exposure of a second or longer.	2011 Landscape and fine art photographer Steve Ashton introduced me to pinhole cameras. That was a real turning point.	Late 2011 Finally went full time professional.
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