

**Jeroen, first of all, congratulations on winning a Top 10 award in the Architecture category of the Photo Is Light World Photography Contest 2020 edition. Tell us a little bit about Jeroen Lagerwerf and what drives him in photography?**

Thank you very much! It was a real pleasure to participate in the Photo Is Light World Photography Contest. I also like to congratulate all the winners, their work is amazing!

I am from the Netherlands and although I have some experience with videography, I am photographing only recently. My idea to take up photography started when I stared at the milky way at night and wanted to take a picture of it. It failed hopelessly. At the start of 2019 I decided to figure out how it could be done properly and bought myself a real camera and started practicing. So, I am pretty new to photography to say the least. In addition to astrophotography, I enjoy doing nature, landscape and also architectural photography.

**Which great photographers inspired or still inspiring your work? In what way?!**

Because of the difficulty of my first goal, to photograph the Milky Way, I gathered a lot of information and learned a lot in a very short time. I bought books, did courses, workshops, masterclasses and bought a whole bunch of tutorials from photographers that inspired me. Some of my favorite artists are: Julia Anna Gospodarou, Daniel Laan and Nicholas Roemmelt. But the list of inspiring photography artist is endless. I like to call them artist because their work is so much more than photography. Their vision and post processing skills are amazing. It is art.

**We know that to be a good photographer he needs to master the technique, understand his equipment and post-production, no matter his photo category. But, as for sciences such as sociology, biology, geology, geography, engineering, ecology, among others, what is important when you want to improve the look and produce better photographs? Can you tell us a little bit about this topic?**

The first answer that comes to my mind is to ability to envision a photograph before you make it. Another important part of photography in general is to know your subject. No matter what it is. I want a photograph to evoke a feeling in the viewer. I need to feel that myself too. By immersing yourself in your subject, you will discover the beauty, tough and soft sides you can emphasize with photography. The same applies to the circumstances in which you photograph the subject. In case of my 'Extended Waalbrug', I wanted smooth water to strengthen the curved shape of the bridge. As a result I deliberately waited for a moment of a watery sunset so that the sky would not distract from the smooth water. The sunset was needed to lit up the concrete structure of the bridge.

**The image "Extended Waalbridge", which depicts a newly built extension to a bridge in Nijmegen, Netherlands, is great. Tell us how this photo was captured!**

Before I took this photo I had visited this bridge a number of times, looking for a nice vantage point to emphasize it's shape, discover different light situations and trying different lenses etc. I ended up taking the picture with a 17mm shift lens and a 10-stop ND filter. In post production I only had to level the image a little and blend two preferred exposures. The final crop was less then 2%.

**How is the creative process for an Architecture photographer like you? What types of photography techniques do you use?!**

The creative part usually starts with scouting around an area or interesting subject. I take a few shots and imagine how the light can fall on the subject at different times. At home I analyze the pictures carefully and try to figure out ways to improve them. With new ideas in mind, I go back for a real shot with (hopefully) perfect light etc. Unless it is really weather depended, I expect the result to be fairly good now. But the process can repeat itself many times if it has to. Usually because the weather wasn't what I hoped for or I picture myself a bird, cloud or human figure some place in the photo. Purely technically I often use focus stacking or noise stacking and of course exposure blending. Just to name a few. Strictly speaking, these are post process techniques, but you have to think about them in advance and therefore also use them during photography.

**For some people to take a picture of a building can be something arid and boring. There is no action involved. But among the Photo Is Light Architecture category 10 award winning images we can find 10 great photos and 10 completely different approaches on how to shoot an architecture picture. Can you explain that? What is Jeroen's approach when dealing with this thematic?**

Well, I think the most important thing here is to stick with yourself. When you get tired of it, go do something else. It could be photography or something completely different. Architecture does not run away. For me, I get peace and inspiration from nature around me. I also love to photograph that. But architecture also impresses me. It is often art in itself. Who wouldn't want to photograph that? Come back when you have gained ideas and developed a vision again. The great thing is that as long as you stay true to yourself, something unique will always come out!

**What kind of different skills an architecture photographer must have?**

Good question :-)

I think knowledge about composition is very important. Also know how light behaves and how colors interact. Each of these can evoke a different feeling in viewers. Also make sure you have a good command of the digital darkroom. Even though you may use it only modestly. It is key in modern photography.

**What was the highest risk situation in which you have found yourself, to take a picture?**

I'm usually pretty careful so it's not too bad. But with night photography I sometimes encounter wild animals. Usually they are innocent and they just startle me, but once I walked into a herd of Scottish Highlanders in the dark. It ended well, but I was not able to take a picture that night. My camera, on the other hand, has had to endure dangerous situations more often. Hanging over edges, just above warm water. Those kind of things.

**How do you choose a subject or location to be photographed? How is your planning and preparation process for the photo session?**

Because I am active on various online communities and photo sites, I automatically see many different locations and topics. If there is something that strikes me, I specifically search for it and often see multiple photos of the subject. Then in my mind I try to form an image of how I would like to photograph it. I often use Streetview to get an idea of the place and then go and explore it. But I also find new locations in magazines or by searching for them myself. As a photographer you view the world in a very special way and you always look for potentially suitable objects and locations.

**Your winning image is really great. But what is, in your opinion, your best photograph?**

Tough question. New images often take the lead but are not always the best. Lets say my 'Ghostly ritual' tree. Because my love for trees in general and it was virtually impossible to frame it in this way. This 'Extended Waalbridge' is cool too. But (cliche) I hope to take my best photo yet.

**If you had no time or place limitations, what event in history or world personality would you like to photograph? Why? Tell us a little bit about this picture.**

The Dark Sky Reserve at Aoraki Mackenzie (New Zealand). Definitely. Please include some Aurora Borealis! Closer to home, I still dream of photographing the Milky Way on top of the Mont Ventoux in France. I was close to making that happen, but the pandemic kept me from doing it. In fact, it has held me back a lot in my short time as a photographer. Architecture is not at the top of my list right now.

**What advice would you give to a photographer who wants to get involved with architecture photography?**

Keep taking photos and experiment as much as you can to develop your skills and vision. As with anything, it pays off to invest time and effort. Asking feedback from other (experienced) photographers can help to discover flaws you're overlooking and to get an idea of where you stand in photography. Respect your subject and its architect. Take the time to research them. And of course, don't rush yourself taking many pictures because you only need one that is outstanding.