



As a homage to all photographers, places and people that help make Gitzo extraordinary, our new eBook features some exciting tales from our Icons around the world. Including a combination of photography advice, the best techniques and applications, as well as a complete guide of products perfect for any situation.

**Relive the best moments framed during our ambassadors' most extraordinary expeditions: From the Northern Arctic Regions to the tropical rainforest of Gunung National Park in Borneo. These moments are witness to some of the world's most endangered species, and an incentive to preserve our planets natural habitats.**



**Frame the extraordinary,  
use the extraordinary**



Tim Laman 06



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**What is your biggest ambition as a professional photographer?**

I think that the highest achievement that I could hope for would be that my images would make an impact on conservation in a real tangible way.

**How do the extreme conditions affect your choice of equipment, and the way you operate in the field?**

To be honest, I don't worry about extreme conditions too much. My Gitzo tripods have worked great for me whether I am in Antarctica in freezing conditions or getting soaking wet in the rainforest of Borneo every day. My tripods definitely take a beating, but as long as I let them dry out after a soaking and take apart the joints to clean them once in a while, they just keep working.

**One of your images has recently been chosen by National Geographic to advertise the re-opening of their museum... It's a stunning piece of work destined to become iconic. What was that magic moment like for you?**

My image called "Bird-of-Paradise Sunrise" is one of my favorites. It captures a Greater Bird-of-Paradise displaying in the canopy at sunrise, and one of the reasons I like it so much is that it shows the bird in its habitat, thus conveying the importance of the forest for all the wildlife that lives there. Without the forest, there would be no birds-of-paradise or other animals dependent on the forest. This image required a lot of planning because it was made with a remote-controlled camera mounted to the tree where the bird was displaying and was controlled from a blind that was positioned in another nearby tree. It required a week of climbing both trees multiple times, usually in the dark before sunrise, to set up the camera and get everything working.

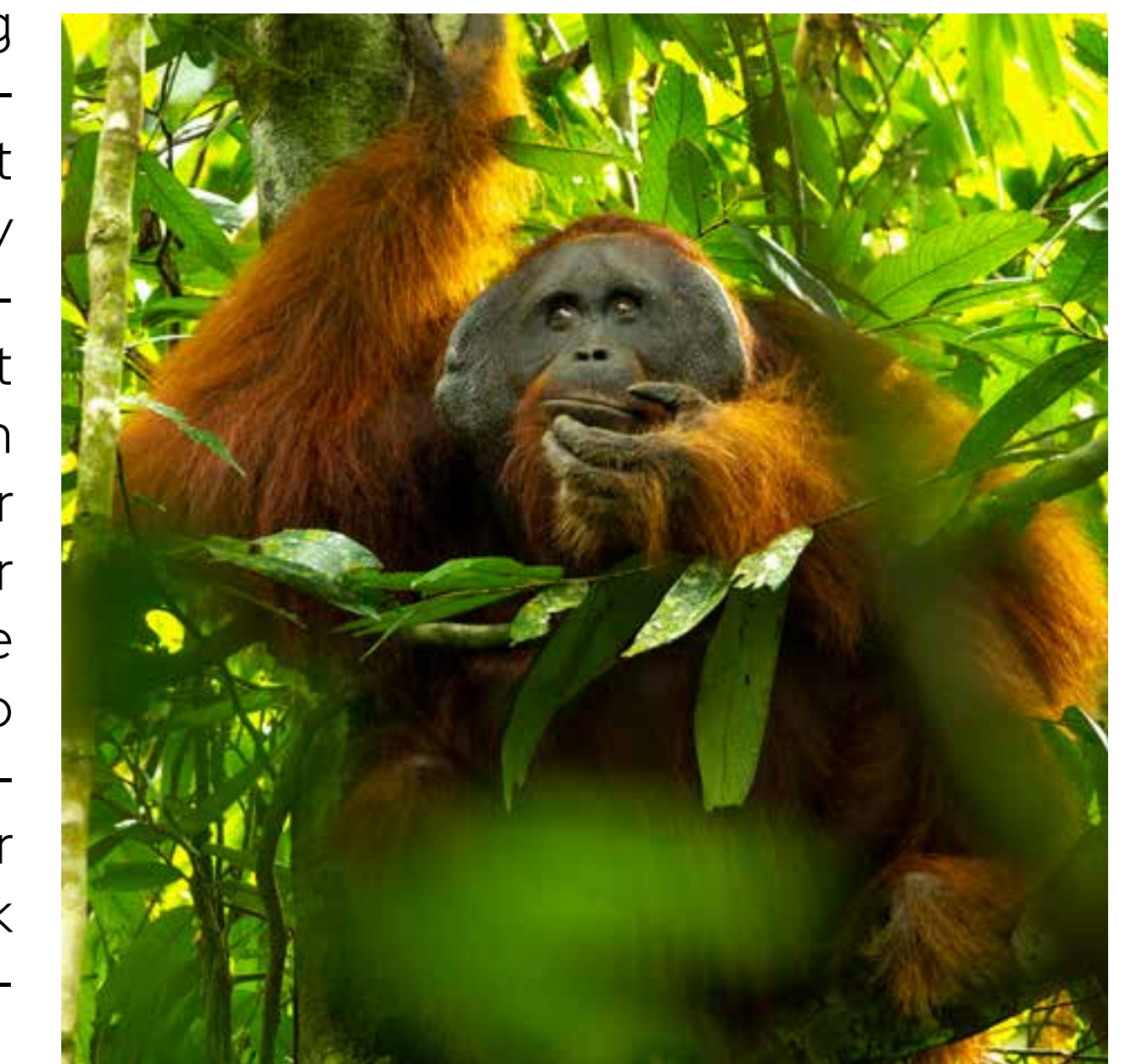


**What is so special about Gitzo equipment that made you choose it above all others?**

I started using Gitzo tripods over twenty years ago because I wanted the best quality lightweight and portable tripod that I could get. I use my tripods in very challenging conditions where it is almost always humid and wet, and I have not been disappointed with my Gitzo equipment.

**In terms of equipment, what gear do you usually take on your expeditions?**

Gitzo tripods have been my choice for over twenty years of shooting for National Geographic in all kinds of conditions around the world, and what is exciting to me about Gitzo is they continue to innovate and improve their products. First the Systematic Series 3 legs are plenty strong for the largest lenses for still photography, and the extra length is great when working on hills, or from boats with the tripod in the water, always together with my Gimbal Head. The Mountaineer tripod is a lighter option for hikes where I will mainly do landscape or closeup shooting. In terms of heads, I prefer using Gitzo ball heads on either tripod for all general landscape and macro work whilst Gitzo Two-Way head with a spotting scope for birdwatching.



## Heroes of the extreme

Interview  
with Tim Laman

**When did your interest in photography start and how did you become a professional? Why did you choose to specialise in conservation photography?**

I became interested in photography as a teenager, and became more and more serious about it as I went through school studying biology and working on different field research projects. I taught myself photography while I continued my education doing my PhD research in the rainforest of Borneo. I became passionate about rainforest conservation, and decided that I could have more impact as a wildlife photographer than as a scientist in terms of spreading awareness about the importance of protecting the planet's biodiversity.

**You've travelled all around the world, but is there any one place you enjoy photographing more than everywhere else?**

One place that I keep coming back to over and over is a rainforest in the Indonesian part of Borneo called Gunung Palung National Park. It is not an easy place to photograph wildlife because of the density of the primary forest, but it is one of the best remaining examples of Borneo's incredibly rich lowland rainforests. The variety of life is phenomenal.

Season's greetings to  
the whole GITZO community!  
Have a creative 2023,  
and may all your shots  
be steady + sharp!  
Tim Laman

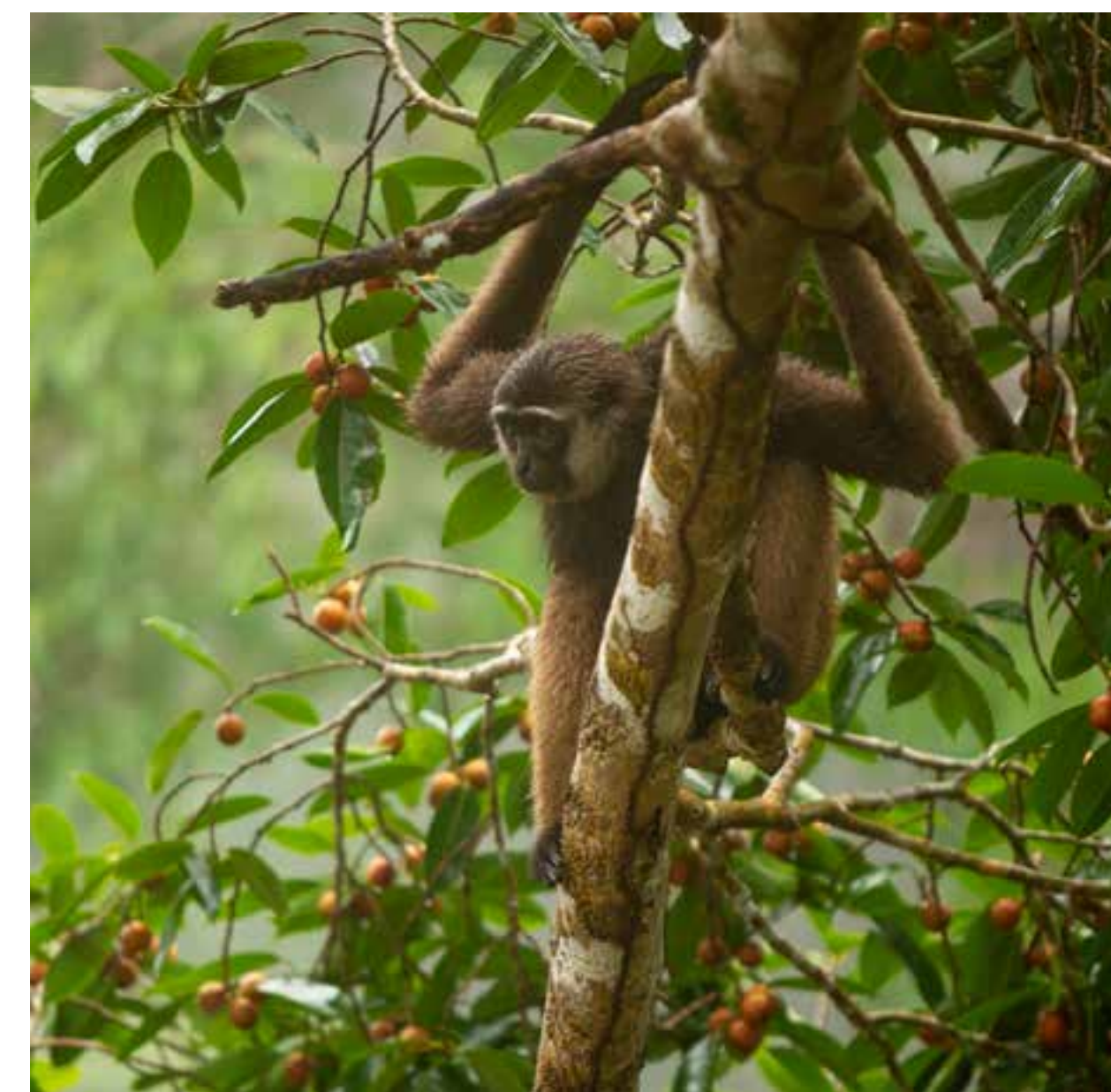


## Borneo Expedition: Saving Rainforests And Endangered Species

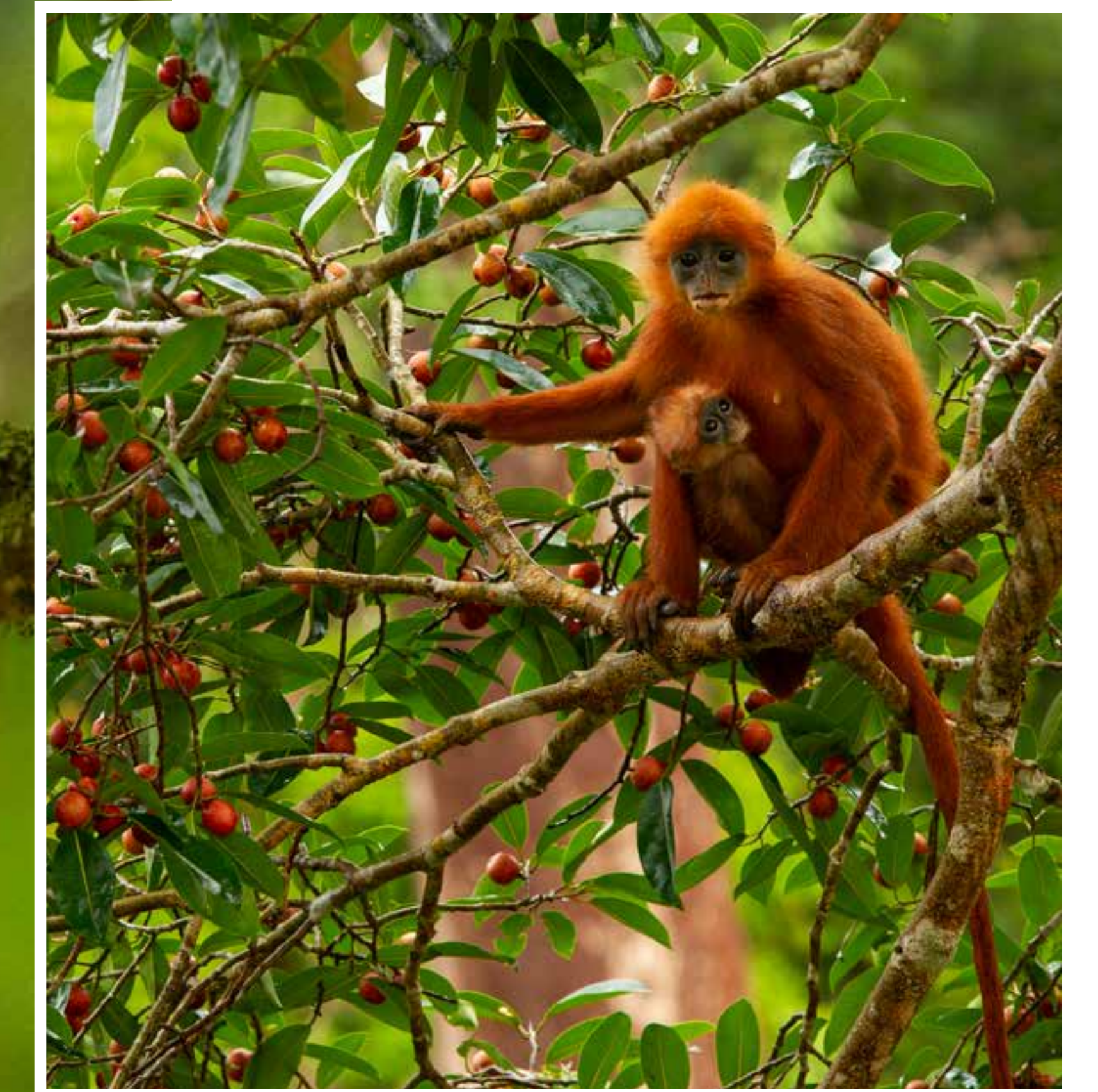
I have travelled to many parts of Borneo, but specifically, I am most obsessed with Gunung Palung National Park, located in the Indonesian part of the island in West Kalimantan Province. I first went there as a student volunteer, went back doing my PhD research there, and became inspired to be a profes-

sional wildlife and conservation photographer while spending time there. Ever since my first article for National Geographic magazine about Borneo's rainforest was published in 1997, I continue to go back to document the biodiversity of this unique place and try to help raise awareness for its protection. I'm back in Borneo in August 2022 to still find new subjects to photograph, and new ways to tell their stories after all the visits over the years. The flagship species here are the endangered Bornean Orangutans, and I have photographed them a lot. It's great to have a charismatic species like that to focus the attention for conservation, but under the umbrella of the orangutan, **what is special about Gunung Palung is that there is so much more diversity of life.** In fact, it is one of the best remaining areas of lowland forest in all of Borneo. **This habitat, which contains the biggest and most valuable hardwood trees, has been mostly logged across this vast island.** But due to the

vision of the Indonesian government to set this park aside, and especially due to tenacious western and Indonesian scientists who have kept a research station going deep in the park for over thirty years, the full diversity of species of Borneo's lowland forests survives here. Although primates are fascinating, some of **my personal favorite subjects to photograph are birds.**



They are especially challenging in the tall rainforest of Borneo, but the diversity of interesting species that inhabit this forest is remarkable (there are over 240!). **Many of the most spectacular, such as hornbills, are also threatened species, and it is important to educate people that these birds need large, healthy rainforest areas to survive.** It's very satisfying to frame images of species like these, that few people have seen in the wild, and to thus be able to help others appreciate the rich diversity of life in a place like Gunung Palung.



**Many of these species are endangered, mostly due to the loss of suitable habitat as rainforest areas shrink across the region. But as long as we appreciate the value of maintaining the full diversity of living species on earth, and places like Gunung Palung can remain protected, then I am optimistic about the future.**

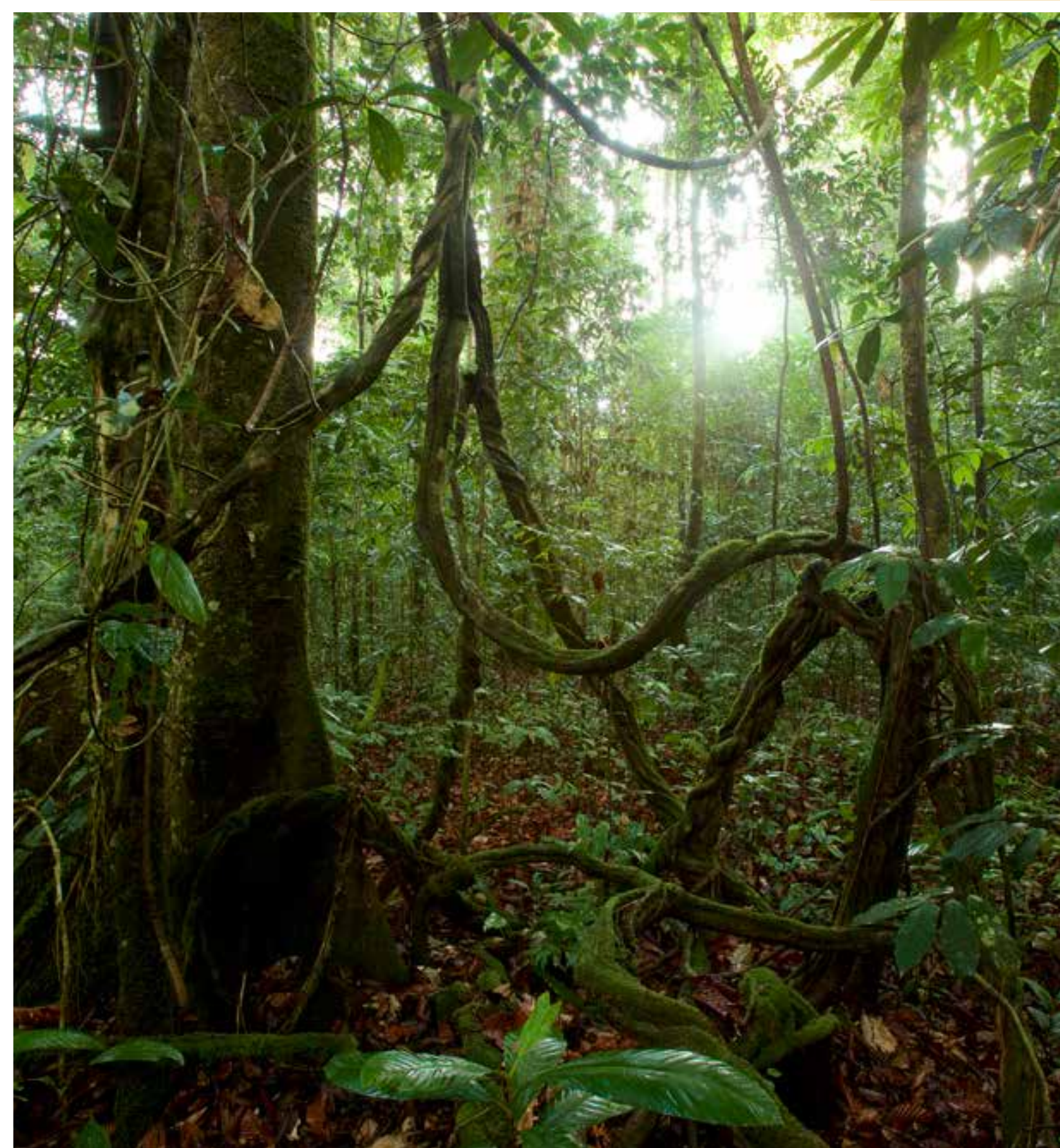
### Still photography with fast moving subjects

A **Systematic Series 3 extra tall model** in combination with the **Gimbal head** is what I like for still photography with big, heavy lenses and fast-moving subjects. A tripod that goes higher than your head can be very useful to be able to extend one or two legs well below your feet, down the hill, and still be able to work with your camera at eye level, photographing wildlife.

### Landscape shooting in extreme resistant condition

When I'm going on a lighter hike and might want to shoot landscapes and also be able to shoot some video, I use a **Mountaineer tripod** with the **Two-Way Fluid head**. This light and compact head is very versatile and works fine with lenses up to the 100-400 f5.6 range. It is also an ideal choice if you are a birder who uses a spotting scope. It is easy to balance the scope and adjust friction.

If you are likely to read the full article you can find it on [Gitzo Inspires Blog](#).





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Tim  
**LAMAN**



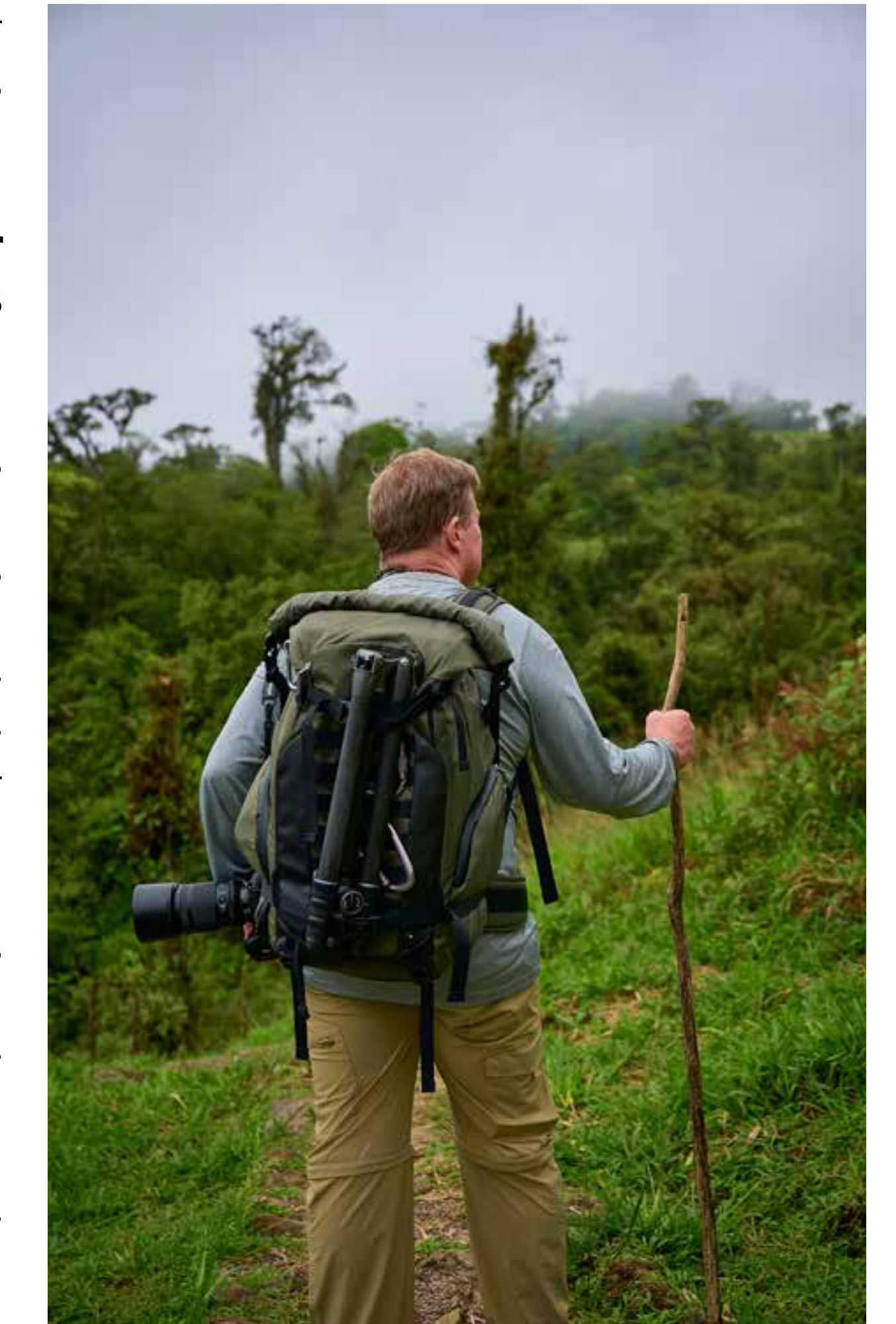
To All!  
Have wonderful  
holidays  
Here's to making  
beautiful pictures in  
2023!  
Joe McNally

A GITZO STORY

I did more and more celebrity work for magazines like LIFE, bigger strobes. It's a process. A lifelong learning curve.

**When did you realize you had found your photographic voice? And over the years how has it changed?**

My muse, photographically, as always been people. If people are involved, I'm curious about it, and curiosity drives the camera, always. Early in my career, I was determined to become a newspaper photographer. I somewhat inadvertently, discovered I had a strong color palette and a pretty good imagination about how to tell stories with color and light. So, I imagine the answer to this question revolves around when I started to shoot for magazines, and do lengthier coverages in color. There's nothing like seeing your photo on the cover of a major magazine. It really was energizing, finding my path with color.



**From 'Life' magazine to 'National Geographic' is quite the leap, which did you enjoy more out of the two magazines?**

Honestly, I always enjoyed shooting for LIFE better than Geographic. Now, I had an amazing time at Geographic, and worked many stories with a brilliant editor and friend, Bill Douthitt. I became the last staff photographer in the history of the magazine, and I had grown up photographically admiring so many of the legendary photographers there that it was quite heady to become a part of that tradition. I learned a great deal from them. Amazing magazine, with an amazing history of important photography that really changed things.

**You've been a loyal user of all our brands, from Gitzo, to Manfrotto and Avenger. How did they become such great work companions to you?**

I've always believed in using high end gear. When the chips are down on location, you have to rely on the equipment, and the fact that it won't let you down. I've done cover sessions with celebrities that were over in five minutes. You can't fail in that instance, and you have to concentrate completely on what's in front of the lens. You can't be worried about the performance of the gear.

**Do you have any new or ongoing projects you'd like to tell us about?**

I do have projects in the works. As I write this I'm heading to Romania for a corporate job. I'm prepping now, two years out, for the '24 Olympics. Tokyo feels like it's barely in the rear view mirror, but you have to look forward as a photographer. I'm teaching a series of destination workshops in 2023 which will bring me to some amazing places. So, things remain busy.

**What is one piece of advice for all those who would love to start a career in photography?**

Read a great deal. Be as aware of the world and its trends as you can be. Look outwards always, and remain sympathetic and curious. Stay motivated to find time behind the camera. During slow times, assign yourself. Remain engaged. And, early in your career, lay down a good groundwork of technical skills. Too many would be photogs take the automated cameras of today off the shelf and expect them to solve everything for them in the field. Ain't gonna happen. Your art is the house, and it has to rest on a strong foundation, and that foundation is knowing what you're doing.

# Heroes of the extreme

Interview with Joe McNally

**You are the undisputed Master of Light in photography, as your career, books, magazine publications, and several other great achievements show. How did you reach such a high competence of photographic skills and lighting knowledge?**

Photography is a great, ongoing teacher, and a humbling enterprise. I am still learning behind the camera, now, after doing this for forty years. Things still surprise me. I still feel when I leave the field and get back to the computer that I could have done better. Always. It's the fuel of the fire of a photographic life. Striving, wanting, needing to do better. My very first cover story for National Geographic was called the Sense of Sight. I spent six months in the field, totting cameras and lenses and generally for a long trip, 200-300 rolls of Kodachrome. Which took up a lot of room in my gear bags! Thankfully, Geographic was pleased with the story and it ran 42 pages, plus the cover. From there, I continued to work with small lights, and as



## Costa Rica Expedition:

### Wildlife and Waterfalls with Gitzo

You can drive from the Caribbean Coast to the Pacific Coast of Costa Rica in a day. In between those intensely blue seascapes, a dream occurs. Pura Vida. The Costa Rican favorite phrase. Pure life. Adventurous life. A life, bounded by waters, with green and clouds in between. **There is no wondering about why the camera falls into immediate, lasting love with Costa Rica.**

You pass through green forests, shocking in their density and verdant color, and home to a boundless array of creatures, and then ascend in winding fashion into clouds hovering on the tips of the trees. From the hazy, soft tendrils of fog gently interlacing with the trees to the deepening, brilliant skies over the Pacific. From the extremes of the redolent forest floor, gloomy and rich from the canopy cover to the brilliant slice of sunlight that arcs through the parted leaves and branches to illuminate a technicolor bird. **The photographer must be ready for extremes**, from bright light to almost no light. From unending, nearly monochromatic expanses of green to birds (such as trogons, tanagers, quetzals, and the purple-throated mountain-gem hummingbirds) that are a color wheel with wings. From fast camera work and shutter speeds to catch a monkey in action, to time exposures that require patience.



## Costa Rica is a place where the tripod must come.

Waterfalls are a signature of the landscape, and they often demand a very thorough hike to access. Lightweight tripod design, a nonpareil trifecta of portability, durability and stability are indispensable. The performance aspects of Gitzo make it adaptable to the most uneven and slippery of surfaces. I used the **Traveler Series 2 combined with the Centre Ball Head** for fast set ups on the rocks! The Gitzo Adventure backpack is also an excellent hiking mate, as it has enough interior room for long glass, multiple camera bodies, and exterior straps where the tripod can live. Long exposures for turning fast moving water into silky streams via lengthy shutter speeds require a durable, fixed platform for the camera.

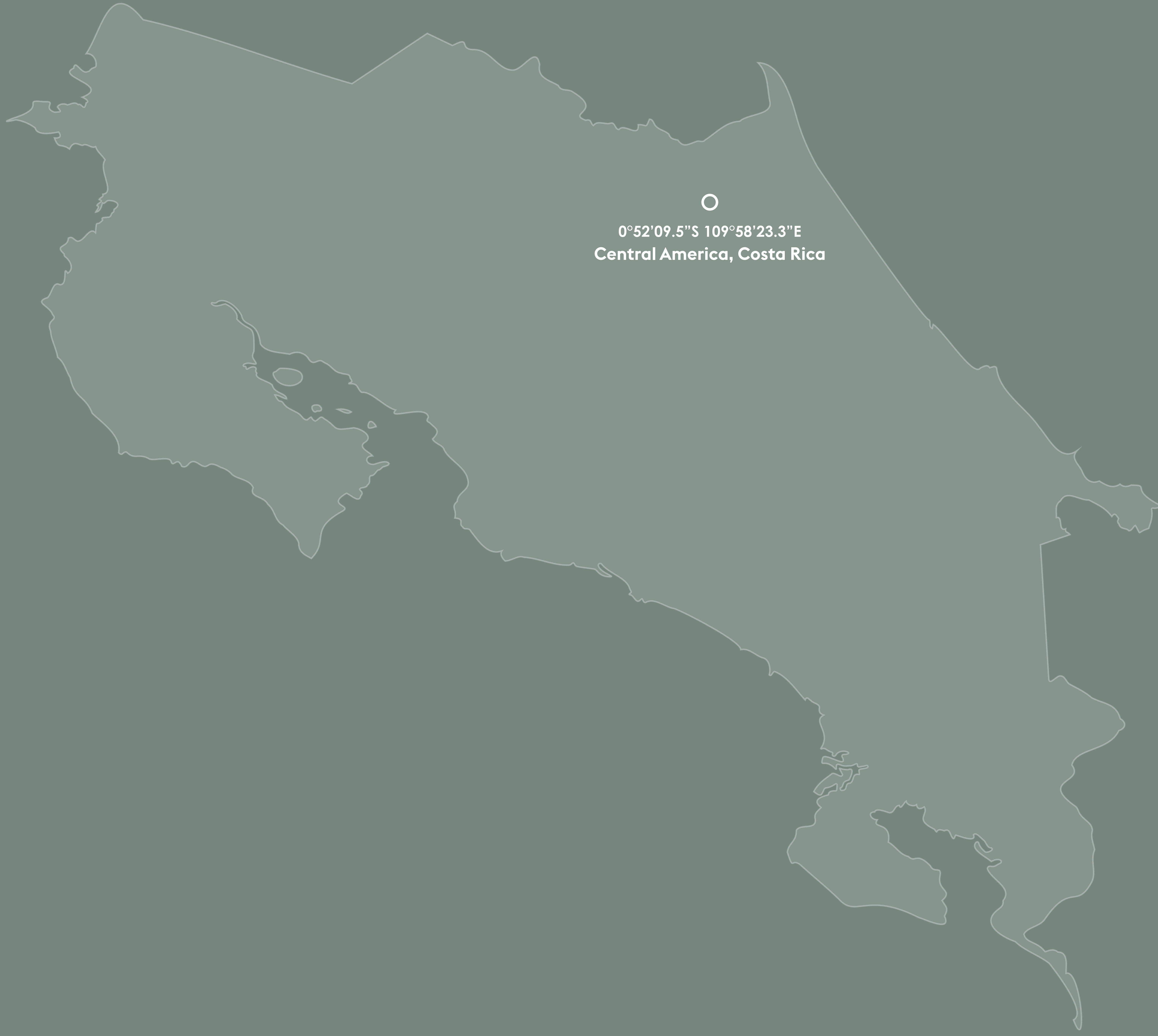
**Gitzo Ball Heads** are ideal for swinging and adjusting the camera and lens to accommodate fast moving, erratic monkeys. Maintaining the frame and composing are all so much easier with a stable tripod. The Gitzo Traveler, for instance, is light but rock solid. You can frame coherently, fine tuning with the braking action of the ball head, and shoot lots of frames. Which is called for, as you, being on the jungle floor, are looking up into leafy backlight. A good photo strategy is obviously to bracket the exposure on such a scene. Stabilized on a tripod, you can program a bracketing series into the camera, and burst frames.

For long glass, seeking spectacular but tiny birds way above in the canopy, stability whilst searching and framing is a huge assist. Gitzo Ball Heads are omni-directional, which is very important given the unpredictable nature their flight paths. Paired a ball head with the performance features of the design make the tripod easy to extend in immediate fashion. A truism of birds is that they generally don't remain static for long, so ease of setup is paramount. If you are flailing about with a non-cooperative set of sticks, the bird is gone. Gitzo in the field is seamless, in a word.



framed  
on Gitzo





○  
0°52'09.5"S 109°58'23.3"E  
Central America, Costa Rica

“

The photographer must be ready for extremes, from unending, nearly monochromatic expanses of green to birds. From fast camera work and shutter speeds to catch a monkey in action, to time exposures that require patience.

”

Joe  
**MCNALLY**

# Heroes of the extreme

Interview  
with **Daisy Gilardini**

## When did you start photographing, and how did you become a professional?

I wanted to be a veterinarian from the time I was a young child, as I always loved nature and animals. After attaining my master's degree, I started my own firm. With a solid business plan and good organizational skills, I was able to balance my day-job commitments with my desire to travel and pursue my interests in nature and photography. I always believed I would succeed in the end, though, through my three P's rule: passion, patience and perseverance. My work was being published more and more often, and in 2006 I became a full-time photographer.

## How did you choose to become a conservation photographer? And why the polar regions?

I was driven by the desire to spend more time in the wilderness, to reconnect with Nature and capture the aesthetic beau-



ty of wild animals with my photography. I love the cold and have always had a connection with the animals that live in those regions. And that's how I came to focus on the polar regions.

## What is your greatest ambition as a professional photographer?

I have always felt my goal is to encourage people to reconnect with Mother Nature through photography. By using striking images, I'm trying to engage their emotions and feelings of empathy in a way that may eventually encourage them to change their day-to-day behaviour and how they look at the world. The more engaged we are, the more likely we are to be prompted to action.

## What is so special about Gitzo equipment that made you choose it above all others?

I started using Gitzo tripods over twenty years ago because I wanted the best quality lightweight and portable tripod that I could get. I use my tripods in very challenging conditions where it is almost always humid and wet, and I have not been disappointed with my Gitzo equipment.

## How do the extreme conditions you work in affect your choice of gear?

As a wildlife photographer who specializes in the polar regions, I work in some of the most challenging conditions there are on the planet. For this reason, my gear has to be reliable and precise.

In all the years I have used Gitzo equipment, it has never let me down. I rely on the Gitzo Ball Head Series 4, the best ball head I have ever worked with.

## What gear do you usually take with you on an expedition?

My standard, go-to kit consists of three camera bodies, six lenses from 14mm to 800mm and a backpack. In terms of supports, I carry three tripods (Mountaineer/Systematic/Traveler) and heads (Ball Head Series 4, Fluid Gimbal Head, and a Two-Way Fluid Head), a Gitzo monopod and a Gitzo microphone boom pole (for underwater photography).

## You often say, "Science is the brain, while photography is the heart". That is a very strong and evocative way of describing it. What do you mean by this?

Photography is one of the most important and powerful mediums of communication we have. It's a universal language, understood by everyone, regardless of colour, creed, nationality or culture.

Sharing images of beautiful conservation flagship species like polar bears and penguins, when coupled with a strong conservation message, connects people on a deep emotional level and act upon a much greater and intangible concept as climate change.

To read the full interview check: [Gitzo Inspires Blog](#)

It's not what's under  
The Tree that matters,  
It's who's gathered  
around it!  
I wish you Merry Christmas  
and a New Year  
full of peace and  
Inspiration!  
Love To all *D. Gilardini*



DAISY GILARDINI

## Svalbard Expedition:

*Extreme Wildlife in Polar Regions*

During the past 25 years I have focused my work on documenting the polar regions. Both the Arctic and Antarctic hold a very special place in my heart, not just because of easily recognizable, iconic species like penguins and polar bears, but because **these animals symbolize one of the most pertinent environmental issues of our time: climate change.**

Every one of us, all of humankind, is naturally drawn to aesthetic beauty. It is easy to understand how polar bears have become iconic symbols of this climate emergency. At the top of food chain, the apex predator, king of the Arctic, is also the most vulnerable.

Sharing images of beautiful conservation flagship species such as polar bears, when coupled with informative and educational text and targeted messaging, helps people connect on an emotional level and act upon a much greater and intangible concept as climate change. While science provides the data that explains issues and suggests solutions, photography symbolizes these issues. Science is the brain, while photography is the heart.

**We need both to inspire and influence behavioral changes and conservation actions. For Nature, and for us.**

Interacting directly with the public, teaching workshops and taking people out into the field allow me to reach out on a more personal level.



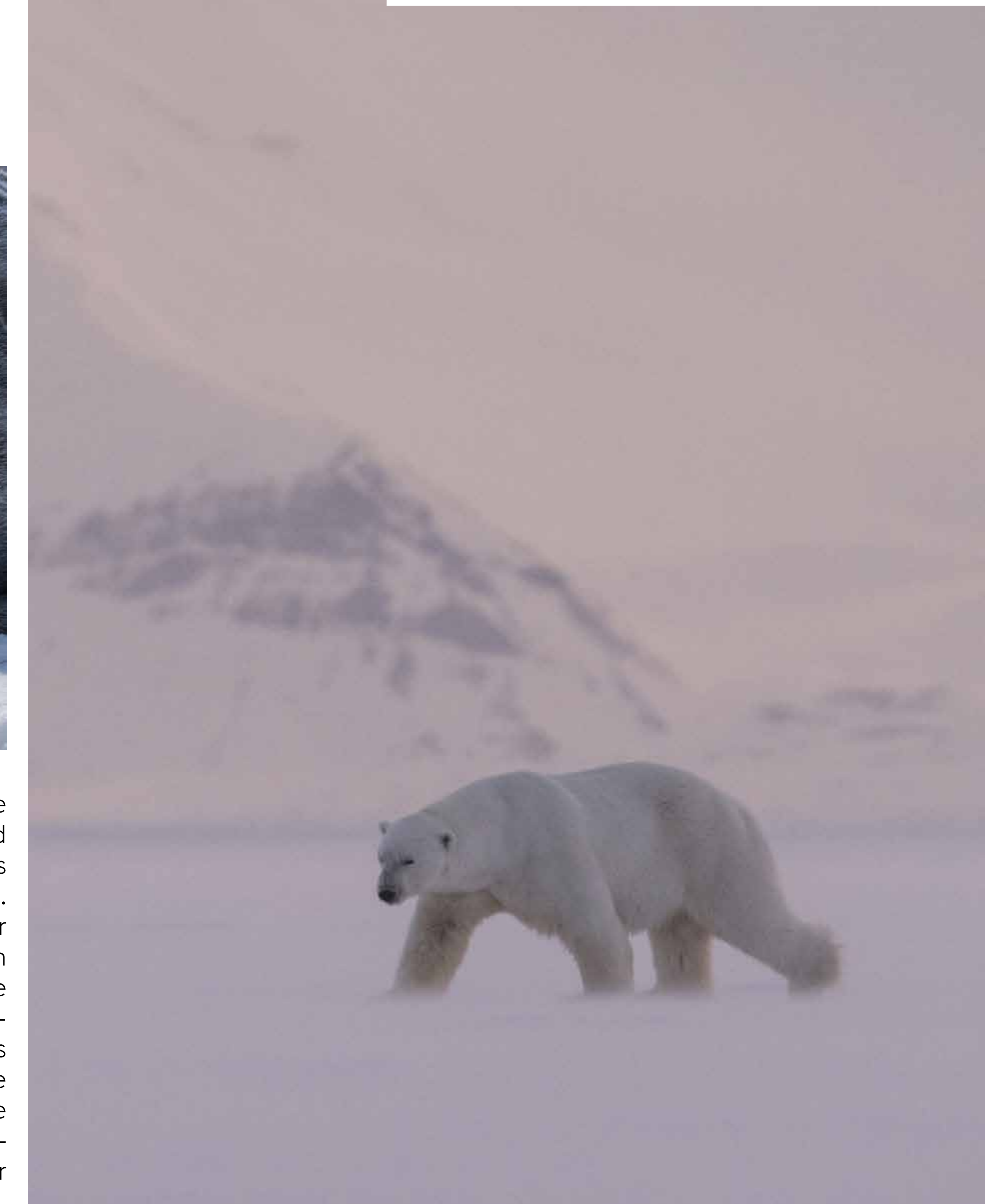
A GITZO STORY

People attend my workshops and talks to learn more about photography. What I teach them goes far beyond that, though. My goal is to teach storytelling, so that they can then educate other people. The more nature ambassadors we can inspire and mentor, the better.

**I believe the key to success, in photography and in life, is doing what you love. Make your passion become your profession and you'll never feel like it's work. Whatever I do, I try to apply my "3P"s rule: passion, patience and perseverance.**



The commitment to documenting the polar regions comes from my love and passion for them. My philosophy in life is live your dreams and follow your heart. Specializing, focusing on a particular subject, is not a choice. It's a question of doing what you're most passionate about. Knowing your subjects, and knowing the ecosystem where they live, is crucial in order to be able to anticipate behaviours and catch the action at the right moment. Returning to the same locations year after year gives you a better understanding of the light conditions.





framed  
on Gitzo

A GITZO STORY



Spending a lot of time with the animals gives you the opportunity to know single individuals and come up with something new and different each time. It takes time and knowledge to capture their personalities and freeze — in a single shot, in a fraction of a second — those anthropomorphic expressions that are essential to making a connection with the viewer. As a wildlife photographer specialized in Polar Regions the challenges in the field are mostly related to the extreme environment where I operate. Extreme cold is a challenge for your equipment as well as for your body. First you have to take care of yourself in order not to freeze, and that includes your body extremities – face, hands and feet being the most exposed. Dressing in layers and avoiding perspiration are vital to survive in these situations.

**PASSION**

The love and passion you will put into your photography will shine through your images.

**PATIENCE**

In wildlife photography there is a lot of frustration involved. You can spend hours and hours and even days and/or weeks, at the mercy of the most challenging weather conditions without getting the shot you are looking for. Patience is simply essential.

**PERCEVERANCE**

Never give up! At the end you will succeed... if you are patient enough!

“

If humankind wants to survive and evolve with our planet we have to act responsibly, by acknowledging with humility that nature is not depended by us; we are dependend on nature.

”

Daisy  
**Gilardini**





*Wishing expanding horizons to Gitzo Community!  
Reaching new heights, exploring the unknown  
And be bold in the face of changes  
May the light and happiness be with everyone!  
Daniel Kordan*

A GITZO STORY

# Heroes of the extreme

Interview with **Daniel Kordan**

**How did you become a world-renowned professional photographer? Did you study your craft?**

In my early years, I attended a painting school. I was a student at this school for six years. I learnt the techniques of painting, which undoubtedly extended my understanding of beautiful compositions and harmonious colour palettes. **I learned to understand the value of intuition. It's a central key to achieve unique results.** About 10 years ago I started as a guide in a mountain club. This gave me the opportunity to travel to amazing places making a great impact on me. My photography career started from painting, and then with my skills as a scientist it later developed into photography.

**How did you find your voice and your style?**

It has been a long journey. Making a great landscape portfolio has also taken many years. It's not something you finish in no time. It took around 7 to 8 years of my career, just to form my skills and portfolio. Finally, after all these years of intense work, my work started to pay off and I got more

widely recognized, and financially I began to make it a livelihood.

**What are your most important sources of inspiration? Any photographers you considered role models to follow?**

Finding new inspiration is important. Besides workshops, I get inspired by documentaries, videos, movies, books and on my own Instagram feed. I also let myself be inspired by gifted painters. Ayvazovskiy, Monet, Rembrandt, Paul Signac, Caravaggio are some examples. Painters like these, influenced both my approach in designing images and their work has helped me improving my colour- composition skills.

**You have a wonderful quote from Lord Byron on your website, is there any connection between your photography, and poetry, specifically poetry of the English Romantics?**

I've not only been into landscape photography. For a period of time I was chief editor in the printed magazine called: "Continent expedition". We wrote about people who conducted challenging and exiting travels. Before photography painting and poetry was a great way to interact with nature and bring its beauty to the world.

**How much research and scouting is there behind each of your photographs? And how important post- production in the final result?**

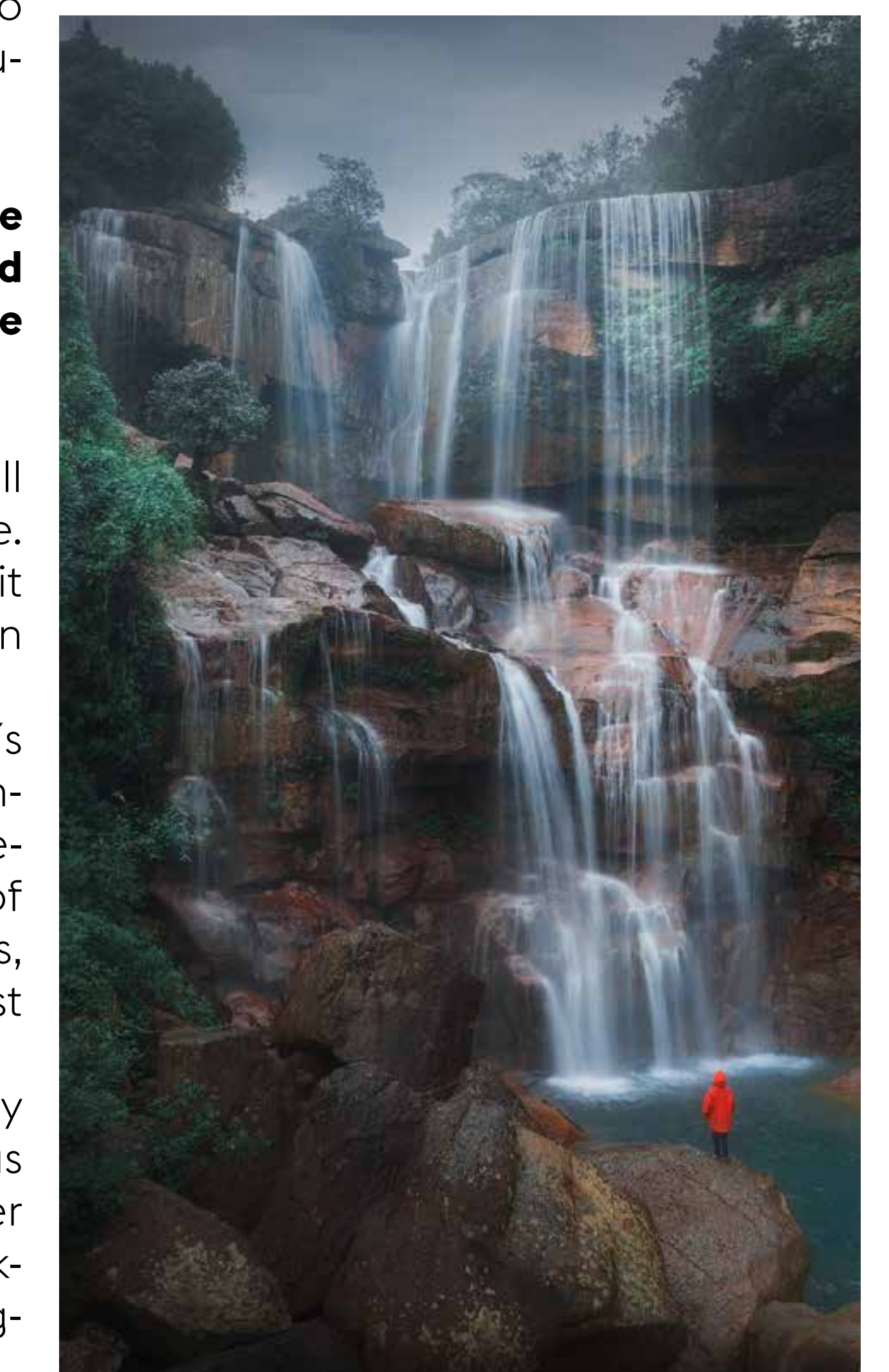
Although I have been many places, I still feel that I have a lot of areas to explore. When I look at the world map, I do it with great excitement studying my own "white spaces". Firstly, I focus on a pictures style. It's about the way you seek specific compositions. Secondly, I'm looking for a desired colour representation. Editing of course becomes a part of the process, but as you understand: It's not the most central aspect. Nowadays, when there are so many photographers around the world, it has become even more important to differ from others. Regarding this, my workflow is quite special. I think it differs significantly from other photographers.

**What is the most inspiring country or place that you have ever photographed?**

I would like to mention some examples. We had an astonishing astrophotography trip in Bolivia and Chile visiting wonderful locations for night photography. It was a mind-blowing experience. When I travel, I'm not just exploring. I also feel like I'm an observer. For that reason it's important for me not to rush. I try to set aside enough time to harmonise myself with the elements: absorbing the landscape and meditate.

**What made you choose Gitzo as a brand for your tripods and heads, when did you get your first one?**

For safe storage of my cameras and lenses, my favourite is Gitzo Adventury. For tripods on hikes and light conditions, I mainly rely on Gitzo Traveler tripods. I must be confident in my equipment, it's like a well trusted friend who's always here with you to help. That's why I choose Gitzo, for at least 10 years I use just their tripods because it's my well trusted friend I can rely on and trust the most precious things for me - my compositions.



DANIEL KORDAN

## India Expedition: Living root bridges in Meghalaya

This series is about the living root bridges in Meghalaya, India. Local Khasi people used to grow the bridges almost like bonsai trees. For decades khasi were forming a bridge which is actually alive and growing further. In person it

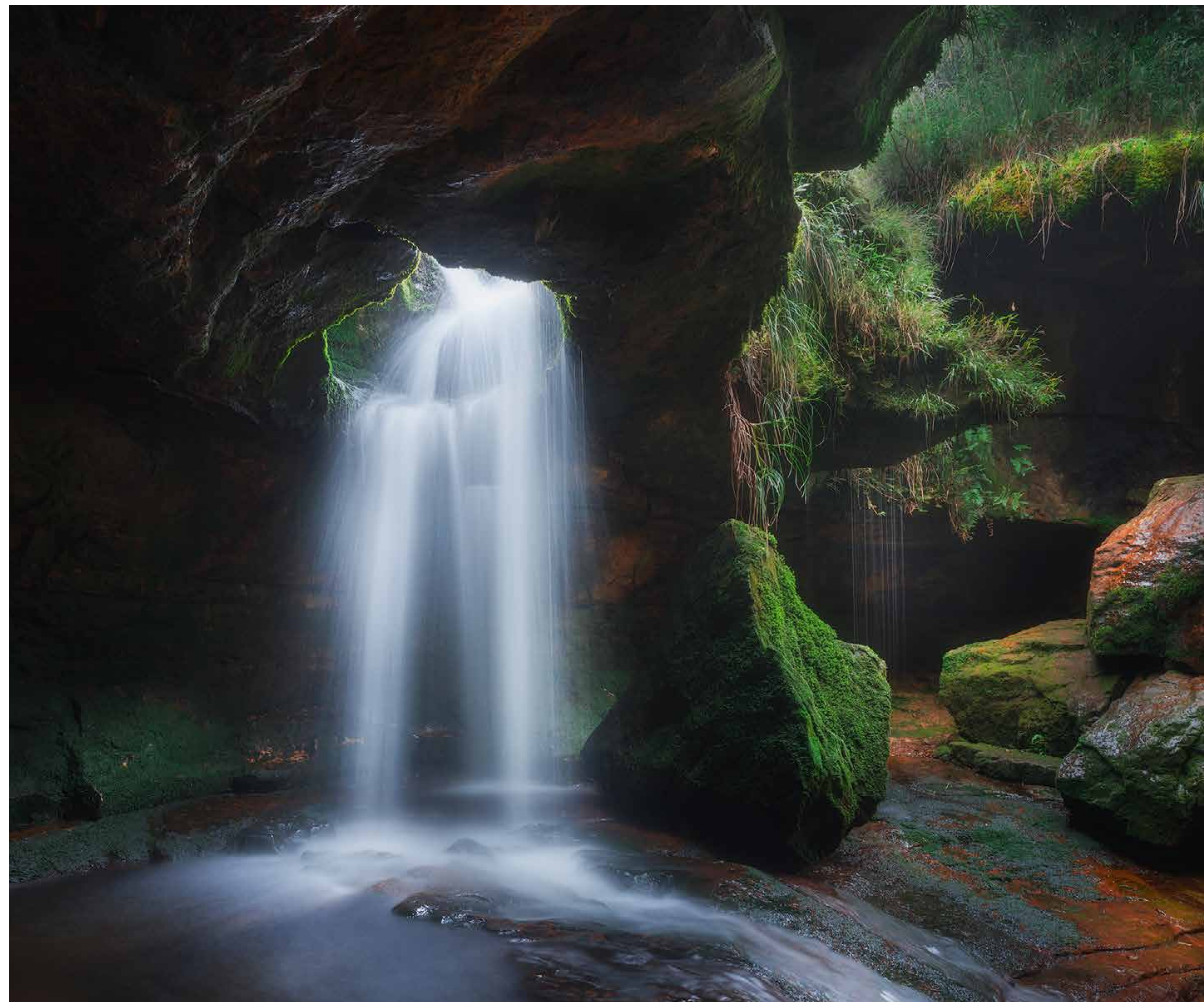
feels like you are in some fantastic Alien movie, crossing the cradle of roots. One of the bridges, for instance, started to grow in 1840. For 180 years it became a true masterpiece. To get here we traveled pretty far to North east India, almost at the border with Bangladesh. For the last three weeks I've been traveling in remote areas of India, starting with Ladakh, then Meghalaya, Nagaland and Bandhavgarh.

The main purpose was documenting beautiful nature of India and in particular project about Living Root bridges. Locals were growing these bridges directing the roots of several trees on both sides of the river with bamboo sticks. It is incredible interaction between humans

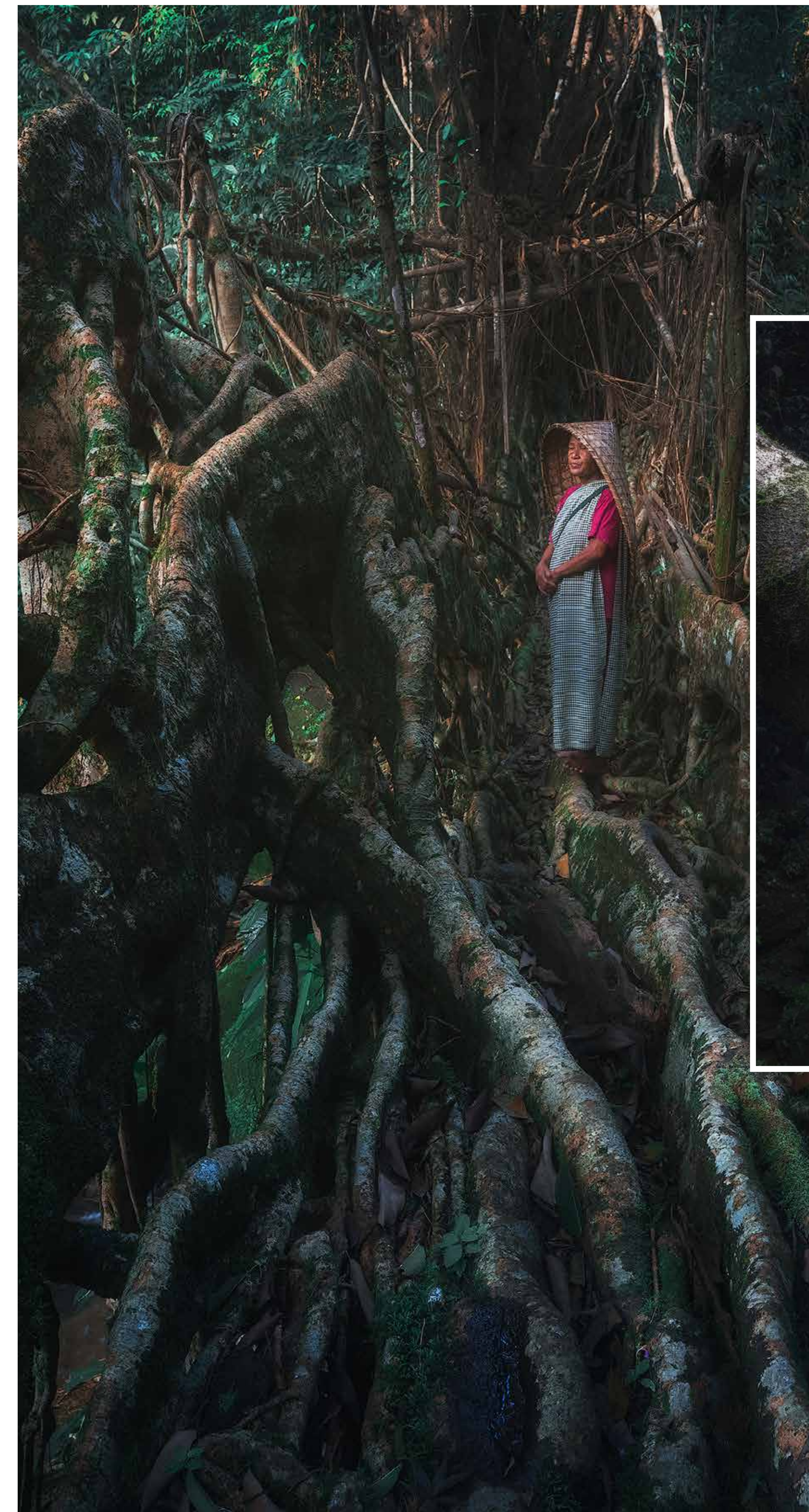
and nature. Imagine the bridge that is alive and blooming - that is why people call them Living Root.

From inside the living root bridge looks straight from a H.R. Giger sketches - like a giant cocoon made by the "Aliens". Yet the place is very beautiful with cascading waterfalls and very friendly locals. But walking there is enchanting - **you feel like being in a movie, scary and magical at the same time.**

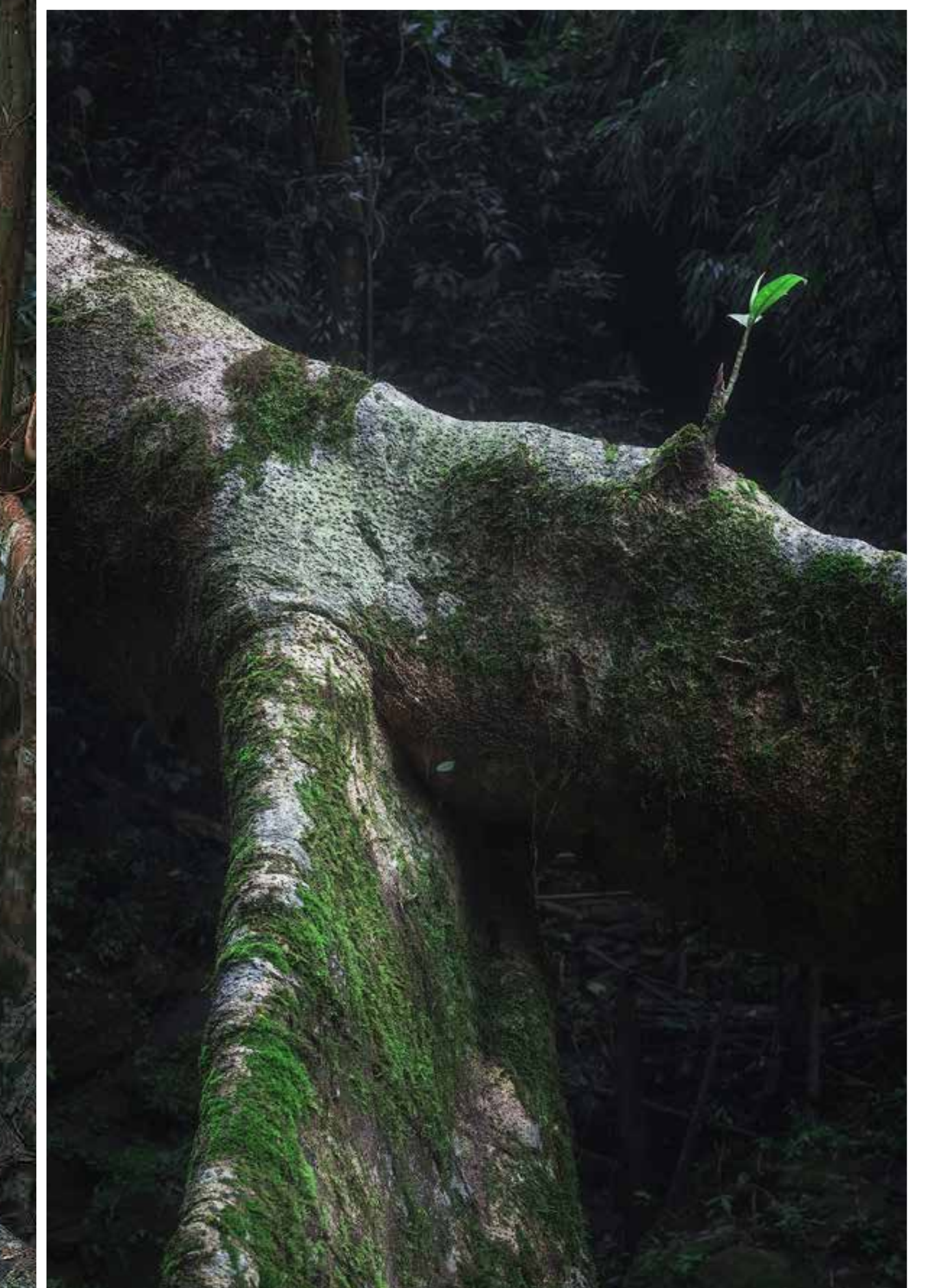
These places are barely visited by foreign tourists. So even locals, especially kids were very curious about us. Hard to imagine we can find such wild spots in India! So densely populated country.



A GITZO STORY



Some root bridges are very crowded, especially the ones near Cheerapunji town. Local tourists lean on the branches to take selfies, so local people make fences, and of course stalls with souvenirs. So unfortunately mass tourism can destroy the place. Hopefully locals will control it better. But some bridges are very wild in the jungles and hard to reach. I will not point out names to protect this wilderness.



### Gear used during the shooting experience.

I used Nikon Z7 II along with 24-70, 70-200, 14-24 and 85 mm 1.8 Z lenses. Among tripod supports, I rather prefer the **Gitzo Traveler**, which helped me in being lightweight and compact when hiking in the jungles. Having a light and sturdy carbon fibre tripod is essential when walking for hours. Especially when shooting long exposures in the deep jungle or at Meghalaya waterfalls with limited sunlight.



framed  
on Gitzo





# Heroes of the extreme

Interview with **Michele Bavassano**

**For a professional photographer you're still quite young, how did you progress so quickly? Was it nature that brought you to photography, or the other way around?**

I have been a nature lover since I was a child. When I was 16 I officially started taking pictures. Having a great love for nature, my first goal was to photograph wild animals, to show the beauty of nature to those close to me. Initially, I never thought that it could become my job, but then with time and social networks, receiving commissions and requests, my work began. So, I would say that photography is a passion that I have always had, as well as nature. But I believe that in reality it was and still is nature that drives me.

**What animal do you enjoy photographing the most? And what animal is a little more difficult?**

Each animal is amazing. Each species has its own particularities and it is always wonderful to observe an animal in its natural environment. I don't think there is one animal above all that I prefer to photograph because I have connections and memories with many dif-

ferent species with whom I have spent unforgettable moments. I can say without a doubt that I love mammals. I love portraits of mammals as you can get different images with them. When I see the eyes of a mammal it is always magical. I have always loved portraying the eyes of nature. Eyes in which you can perceive a spirit, a soul. Each glance communicates something to us, but each animal looks at us in a different way.

**What would be your greatest ambition as a conservation photographer?**

I would like more people to start loving nature in a conscious way. Today the theme of nature is more and more central but often many people are not aware of how even small things have a great impact on nature. An awareness that not only goes to make people love nature by showing its beauty but also to show how some dynamics are extremely delicate. However, I believe that this is something that cannot be achieved on social media, it is necessary to immerse yourself in nature and experience it. For this reason, I love workshops and tours in nature; they are the perfect way to talk about and feel our impact on nature.

**What is so special about Gitzo equipment that made you choose it above all others?**

Gitzo for me has always been synonymous with reliability and quality. From the first product I got to use, I haven't gone back. As a wildlife photographer, I often find myself in "extreme" environments with prohibitive temperatures, humidity and adverse atmospheric conditions of all kinds. My equipment has always kept functioning, allowing me to work without interruptions in all conditions.

**In terms of equipment, what is the gear you usually go to your expeditions with?**

I can never do without the backpack – the Adventure 45L is my greatest travel companion. It has been around the world with me for years on my long hikes. Next in my classic kit is Systematic, Series 3, 4 sections and the Gimbal Fluid Head. It's a compact kit with great stability, that helps me to capture my images on all terrains.

**How do the extreme conditions affect your choice of equipment, and the way you operate in the field?**

Not much actually. Obviously, my technical clothing equipment changes considerably but with my supports, on the other hand, I have never encountered any problems or needed to modify my kit. I've worked without interruption from -20 to over 50 degrees without ever feeling the need to change.

**Your motto is very interesting: "Research, into nature, of art", can you explain this in a little more depth?**

My passion began with the aim to document nature. I wanted to make my art from what I observed. This is why I immediately started working as a photographer, on the search for a personal style that reflected my ideas and the memories of those moments, captured with a photograph.

For this reason, over time I have defined my photography as "the search for art within nature". For some time now, I have tried not to limit myself to a classic photo-reportage/documentation. Rather, my goal is always to communicate and show what my eyes see out there.



Michele Bavassano

## Africa Expedition:

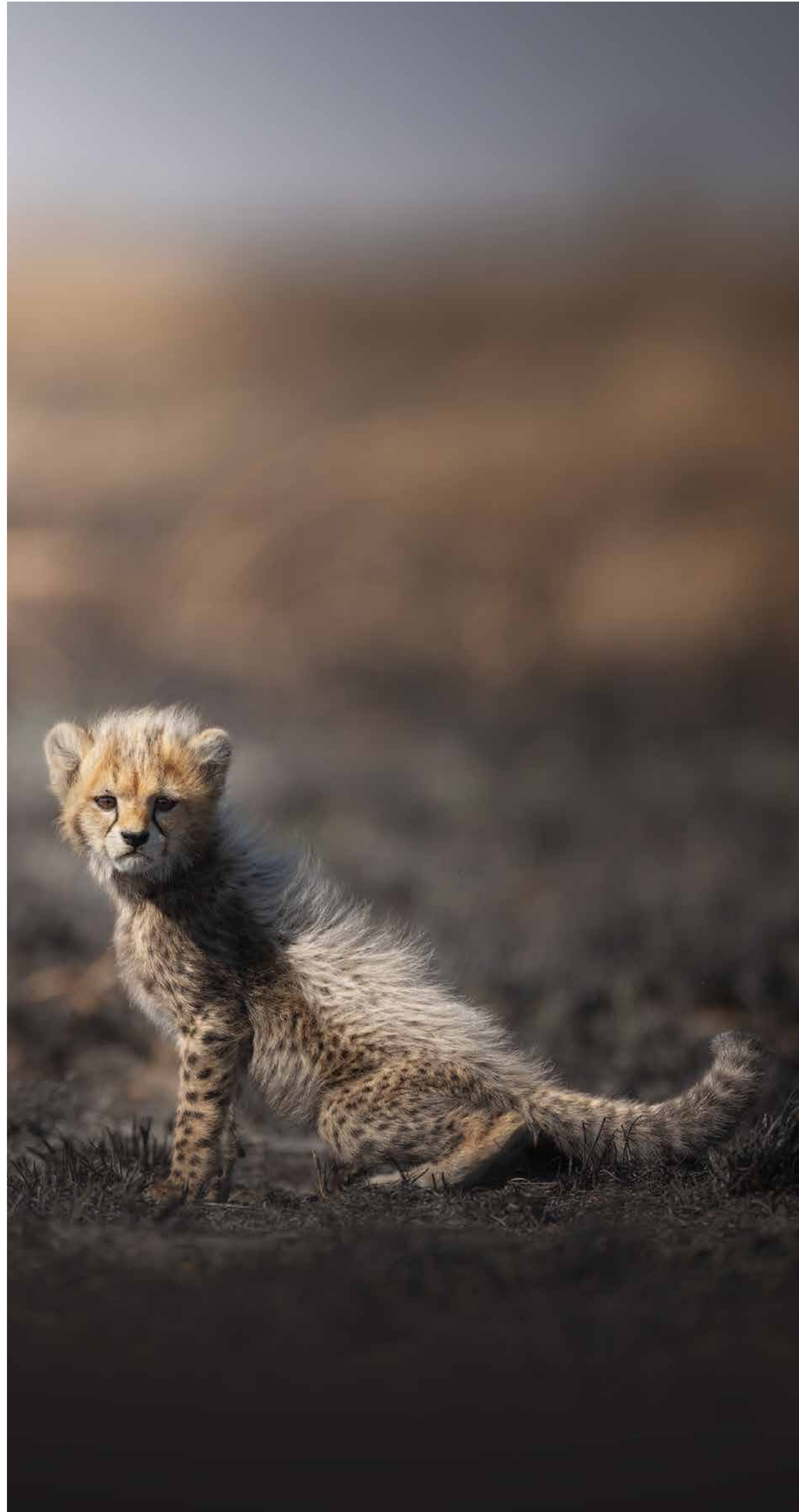
### Wildlife in Tanzania

I embarked on this journey to document one of the greatest natural events on earth – **the great migration**. As in all my expeditions, I started with the aim of telling nature's story through my viewfinder and my photographic style, trying to frame unforgettable images and moments. I love travelling to these places, not only to live the experiences, but mainly to raise awareness and bring these epic natural stories to all nature lovers.

I feel very lucky to have met some among the most beautiful animals of the world. On my expedition into the broad and wild Savannah I had encounters with lions, cheetahs and – best of all – an incredible crossing of wildebeest and zebras on the River Mara. I preferred August because this is exactly when the large herds of wildebeest and zebras move from the north of the Serengeti to the Masai Mara in Kenya, making it one of the world's largest terrestrial migrations. Millions of animals on the march shift the natural balance of two of the most important African national parks.

### How to find the perfect location

In Africa, it's often necessary to search across hundreds of kilometres to find the perfect situation. Safaris are notoriously tiring, as the most beautiful scenes are always difficult to find. The hard part is capturing important sightings in perfect light. This isn't always possible, but it's important to do everything to try and achieve it. The first secret is, undoubtedly, don't waste



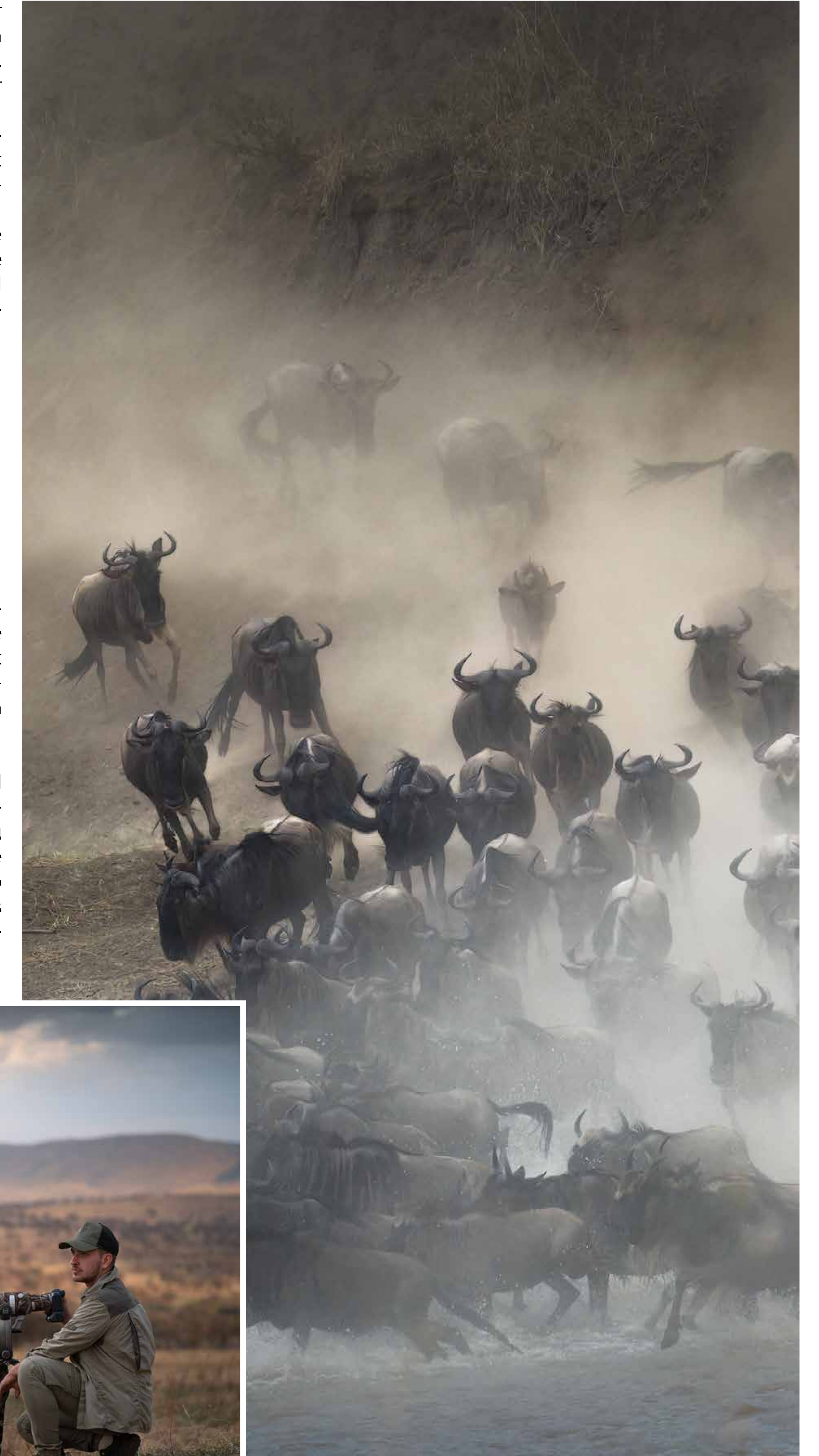
A GITZO STORY

time. Every morning the alarm is set for 2 hours before sunrise, so we can be in the field well before the sun comes up. This gives us more time to achieve our goals and to study the sunrise scenes. What makes the difference is perseverance. We often find ourselves in front of very static scenes. But this is precisely where we are able to study potential and decide if it's worth waiting: maybe even all day. While you wait, you have the chance to explore the area and prepare your own plans on the possible stories and shots to be realized.

### Patience and perseverance are the main elements that help us to live and frame the most beautiful scenes in wilderness.

It's important to experience every minute of a safari, from the sunrise to the sunset. This is because the first and last light hours of the day are the most attractive, due to light shades and even for wildlife activity.

What's crucial is to focus on goals and seize the opportunities that nature offers us: for instance, when shooting from a jeep you have to consider the positioning of the car to the subject to get the perfect frame. Looking for spots where you can optimize the point of recovery completely change the result.





framed  
on Gitzo

43.

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*Frame the Extraordinary,  
Use the Extraordinary*

During wildlife expeditions is very important to keep with you a couple of camera bodies and minimum two lenses. Versatility and protection in case of breakdowns are vital for photographers. For this reason, I mainly worked with two Canon camera bodies and I uses **Gitzo Systematic Series 3, 4 sections** combined with the **Gitzo Fluid Gimbal Head**. Obviously I am always supported by the **Gitzo Adventure Backpack 45L**.



“

I have always loved portraiting the eyes of nature, in which you can perceive a spirit, a soul. Each glance communicates something to us, but each animal looks at us in a different way.

”

Michele  
**Bavassano**

Merry X-mas!  
I'm wishing you a flourishing  
health, good spirit, lots of  
laughter & prosperity!  
Let's keep coming together  
in the new year to protect  
our beautiful planet  
Pie Aerts



## Heroes of the extreme

Interview  
with Pie Aerts

**"Art / beauty will save the world" sounds like a sort of mantra of yours... We believe this is true too. How did you develop your art, and your aesthetic taste?**

Being a kid there was nothing I loved more than drawing. While others played video games or rode their bikes, I could lock myself in for hours with pencil and paper. It taught me to use my imagination and create stories within the four edges of a canvas. Now, almost 3 decades later, I'm using that very same spirit in an attempt to create meaningful stories about the last true wild places on earth. I'm going back to that 'drawing desk' of my childhood every time I go back to Africa. When I'm there I immerse myself in nature, work with my senses, and I get that very same sensation of being a kid and getting carried away in my own fantasy world.

**How did it all become your job?**

My background isn't in photography or art, but in economics and business. However, in 2018 I decided to take a big leap of faith and together with

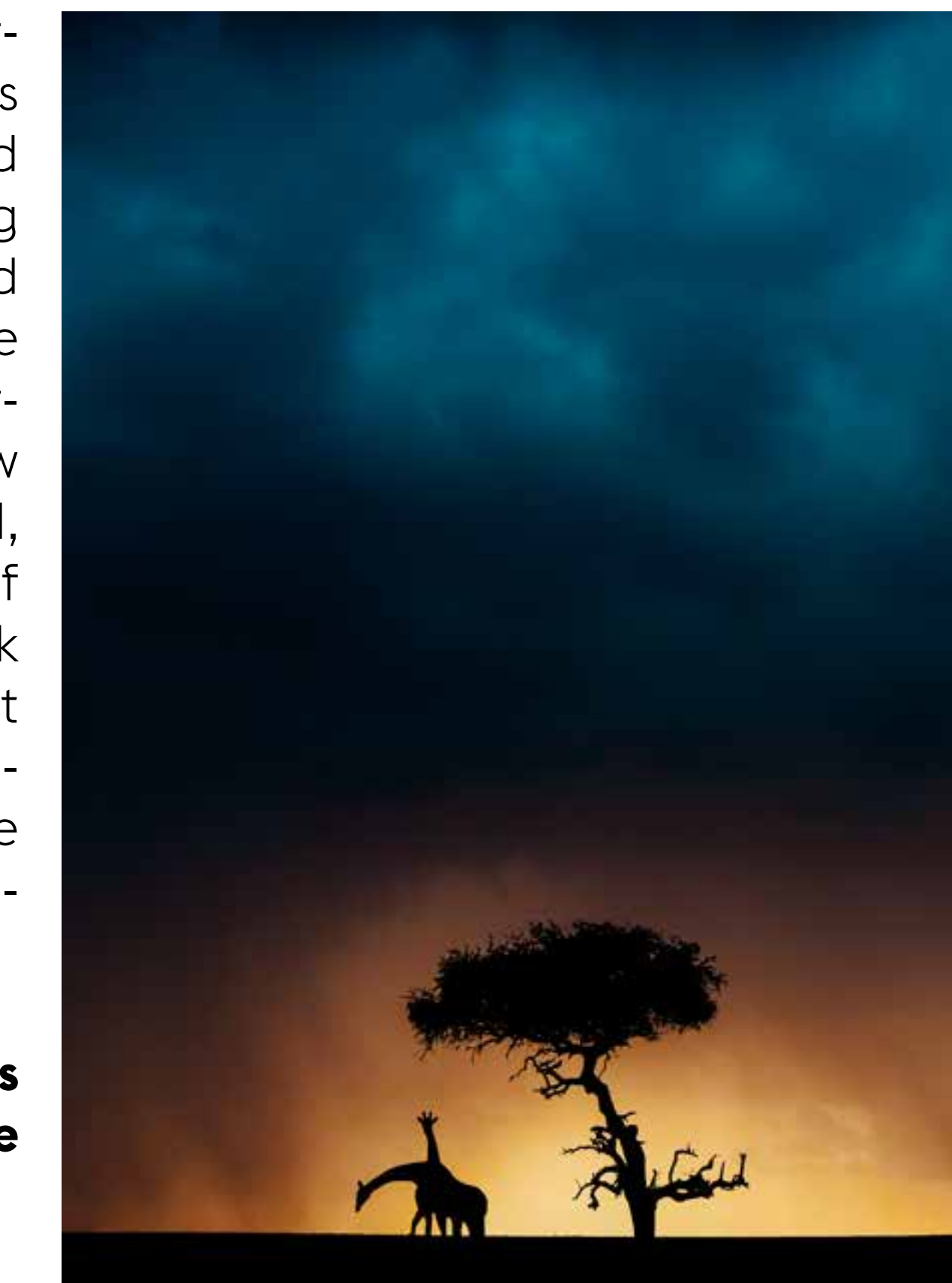
my wife Jessica, we both quit our corporate jobs, said goodbye to our lives and friends back home and embarked on a way-one ticket to India. Breaking with the life I had so carefully crafted for more than a decade was one of the scariest things I ever did, but that courage got rewarded pretty quickly. A few months into our trip, the stars aligned, and I got an offer by teNeues, one of Europe's largest photography book publishing houses, to publish my first photographic monograph. Photography became my way of examining the cause of an increasing disconnect between us and our natural world.

**In all this, your "Prints for Wildlife" fits perfectly, when and how did you create it, and what is its ultimate purpose?**

Because I firmly believe that art can be an incredibly powerful tool in restoring the lost connections I am examining through my photography, I initiated 'Prints for Wildlife' in 2020. An annually returning month-long print fundraiser collecting funds for African parks and communities that are badly hit by Covid19 by selling wildlife art. By bringing together more than 230 wildlife photographers from every corner of the globe, we managed to raise \$2.1 million dollars for conservation across 3 annual editions. 100% of the proceeds went to African Parks Network in support of people and wildlife on ground in 22 parks across 12 countries under their management.

**In the past 3 years you have spent some significant time in Kenya. Can you tell us what you are working on?**

When the world came to an abrupt stop due to the outbreak of a global pandemic in March 2020, I decided to exclusively shift my focus to the African continent to document the impact Covid19 was having on wildlife and communities. In the years that followed I witnessed and photographed the disappearance and reoccurrence of tourism in Kenya, Zambia, Botswana and Rwanda. Never before did silence feel so confusing, fearful, and liberating all at the same time. In fact, in the absence of the usual herds of tourists, but with wildlife in full effect, I felt a deeper connection with Africa than ever before.



**Among the many places you've visited, which do you think is in the most danger, and needs much more attention than it has right now?**

We came to a stage in which the destruction and degradation of our planet is so widespread and on such a large impactful scale, that it does not make sense anymore to pick certain places. The climate crisis we are currently facing is mostly one of disconnection. Humans have not only disconnected from the natural world, but also from each other and ourselves. Restoring those broken connections all starts within yourself. A lot of small contributions create a forward movement, a wave of hope and believe in the possibility of building a better world for our children.

**Can you tell us what in our everyday life we can do to help you in your mission?**

Wherever you live in the world, go outside after you read this and enjoy nature. Use your senses to engage with your surroundings. Breathe the fresh air, look for beauty in every simple moment, enjoy the warmth of sun on your face, a sudden breeze of wind or drops of rain on your skin. It might sound silly, but the power of those simple moments is what can make you reconnect with life in its purest form. And all we need at the moment, is more people to reconnect with their inside and outside world.



## Kenya Expedition:

*In search of hope*

Hi everyone, my name is Pie which has – contrary to popular belief – nothing to do with apples. Through my viewfinder I'm examining the intricate relationship between humans, animals and the natural world in an attempt to find answers why we seem increasingly disconnected from each other, ourselves and from our natural environment. See it as a visual journey towards the essence of our existence. In doing so, I discovered a profound love for wild places, because they constantly remind me of the true essence of what it means to be human, to be vulnerable, to be present and to be connected.

During the past 8 years I have spent the majority of my time emerged in nature and I learned that - in a world where we have all the answers at our fingertips - there's still a few things in life that require patience. Patience to create an understanding of the intricate web of life. Patience to explore the depths of our existence. And patience to understand that every wild animal is a mystery in itself. And then, within that space, you will see that everything is balanced and that every encounter with nature is not an intellectual pursuit, but an affair of the senses, on a visual journey towards the essence of our being. Because in the end, saving nature, is essentially about saving ourselves. I mainly witnessed and photographed the disappearance and reoccurrence of tourism in Kenya, Zambia, Botswana and Rwanda. Never did silence feel so confusing, fearful, and liberating all at the same time. In fact, in the absence of the usual herds of tourists, but with wildlife in full effect, I felt a deeper connection with Africa than ever before. And in that particular space of not knowing what's ahead of us, 'Umoja' was born, a series of imag-

es that became my way of dealing with the uncertainty of living in between an old world that was falling apart and a new one that has not emerged yet. This resulted in an ongoing print collection and a book that tells the story about my personal relationship with the landscape and wildlife I encountered.

When I am documenting wild animals, my most important goal is to make you feel that you are there, in that particular moment, when looking at the image. To feel their size, their beauty and their overwhelming power. That is also why I'm on a constant hunt for the perfect conditions, because when the circumstances are exactly right, it almost allows me to step into another dimension, and that is tangible in the final image. This is especially the case when being in the presence of two of my most favorite subject, elephants and rhinos. They radiate such a rare and electrifying energy. A combination of confidence, grace and humility, as if they exude ownership over the land they walk on, while at the very same time allowing space for every other sentient being to

coexist with them. A true symbol of what the natural world means to me. Over time, I learned that when practising that vulnerability in the field, it can be incredibly rewarding to experience how my own senses become ultra-engaged. In order to foster that connection, I make sketches in my mind and on paper, so I allow myself to dream up certain compositions and light. In addition to that there's two more concepts that have shaped my work over the past years. That's how Africa feels to me. I'm going back to that 'drawing desk' of my childhood every time I go back to Africa. **When I'm there I immerse myself in nature, work with my senses, and I get that very same sensation of being a kid and getting carried away in my own fantasy world.** For me Africa is all about energy. This means trusting your intuition and embracing the rhythm of the bush.



As a wildlife photographer and Gitzo Ambassador, I work in some of the most remote and challenging environments. Working with lightweight, durable and reliable equipment is therefore key to telling meaningful stories.

**Gitzo's tripods are exactly that, steady as a rock, but light as a feather.**

I am using their tripods for my still photography work as well as for my video work. When I travel by vehicle, I mostly make use of the **Systematic Tripod Series 3** together with the **Fluid Gimbal Head**. This set-up allows me to keep longer heavier lenses stable but at the very

same time allow for smooth movement when tracking wildlife on video. When I am exploring walking around in the bush, I usually rely on the **Traveler Tripod** and **3-Way Fluid Head**. This lightweight and compact set-up gives me maximum mobility and flexibility to explore the most barren landscapes like thick forest and jungles. Gitzo Traveler Tripod is also my go-to set-up for shooting medium format analogue work. Because I shoot from a tripod 95% of

the time, it's important that my set-up is lightweight and easily foldable, so that I can carry it everywhere I go. And the Traveler series does exactly that. I'm calling myself incredibly fortunate being able to call the outdoors my playground and as a result of that spend such significant time surrounded by the forever mystery that is nature. It quickly became my highest value in life and there is no place where I feel more grounded, grateful and connected.



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on Gitzo





## GITZO ICONS



**TIM LAMAN**  
Biologist and conservation photographer

Tim first went to Borneo in 1987 and his pioneering research in the rain forest canopy led to a PhD from Harvard and his first National Geographic article in 1997. He has pursued his passion for exploring wild places by becoming a regular contributor to National Geographic magazine where he has published 23 feature stories. Tim has developed somewhat of a reputation for being able to come back with shots from the wild of nearly impossible subjects.



**JOE MCNALLY**  
Portrait and commercial photographer

McNally is known world-wide as not only one of the top, technically excellent photographers of his generation, but his charming demeanor, confidence and humor make him a sought-after choice from CEO's to celebrities to commercial and magazine clients alike. He is among the rare breed of photographer who has bridged the world between photojournalism and advertising, amassing an impressive commercial and advertising client list.



**DAISY GIRALDINI**  
Wildlife and conservation photographer

She specializes in the Polar Regions, with a particular emphasis on Antarctic wildlife and North American bears. She is from Switzerland originally, and is now based in Vancouver, Canada. She fell in love with Antarctica during her first trip there in 1997. She has since devoted most of her time to photographing the Polar Regions. In 21 years of polar exploration, she has joined almost 70 expeditions to Antarctica and the Arctic.



**DANIEL KORDAN**  
Landscape photographer

Daniel Kordan has always been fascinated by the possibilities of photography since his early childhood. He grew up at beautiful lake region under Moscow exploring wild nature, spending most of his free time in the nature. Mix art, nature, constant activities and you'll receive a summary - art of Landscape photography. He is an official Nikon, Gitzo and Lucroit ambassador.



**MICHELE BAVASSANO**  
Wildlife photographer

For several years now Michele has been observing nature through his camera with the aim of sharing his story to others who connect with his photographs. All of Michele's photographs have a personal style that often resembles a "dreamlike" vision of nature. Michele can express his vision by anticipating the right moment, scene, light, and arrangement of the composition to achieve the perfect shot.



**PIE AERTS**  
Documentary & wildlife photographer

Through his lens, he examines the intricate relationship between animals, humans and nature. After more than 10 years of fieldwork all across the African continent and beyond, as a photographer as well as an activist, Pie has developed an intricate understanding, connection and passion for documenting the last wild corners of our planet.

