

DP NEWCOMER: NATALIE ORD

With a deep love of nature, Albury's **Natalie Ord** is a self-taught photographer with a great eye and a moody sensibility, offset by a terrific appreciation for the darker and lighter side of the craft.

What's your very earliest memory of photography?

Both my dad and my uncle were into photography and I remember as a very young kid – probably six or seven – Dad taking us outside at night and doing long exposures of the moon and explaining what it was he was doing. Of course all of the technical side went right over my head. In those days it was film too, so being involved in the process of shooting the moon and then seeing the pictures developed was just fascinating. I thought it was so cool. They were just hobbyists – they didn't do it all the time – but they obviously really enjoyed it.

I took to stealing away with my dad's camera and taking photos, which was a little bit silly because of course he was going to know I did it as soon as he got the roll developed. But I never got in trouble for it, and he never said anything.

Who was the first person to tell you that you had a talent for photography, and what was it they said?

It was a friend in the communications industry. She told me I had a good eye, and looked at some of my photos and told me why they were good. I hadn't ever thought about it until then – I'd just been taking photos for work. It was relatively boring stuff, pictures of rivers and works we'd done while I was full-time with the local Catchment Management Authority. But she talked about my composition, having a good focal point, even just use of colour – she really encouraged me from there, and that's when I bought a DSLR and started to really get interested in photography.

At what point did you plant your flag and declare yourself a photographer?

I started taking photos just for myself of different subjects, trying different techniques, as well as reading a lot of books and magazines and joining Redbubble, things like that. But I don't think I really thought of myself as a photographer until I started charging people for my work. It's a big distinction. There are so many people these days who simply buy themselves a good camera and call themselves a photographer. So that was a big step for me.

Interestingly, once I started thinking of myself as a proper photographer, I noticed a real change in my work too.

How did you go about developing a style – was it by emulating other photographers?

I've always tried very consciously not to



» IMAGES

BARN AND CART

» (ABOVE) Shot with a Canon 50D; 10mm lens; 1/80sec; f/13; ISO 640

NATALIE ORD

» (LEFT) Photographed by Blaire Crawley



imitate other photographers for that exact reason – I think it's so important to develop your own style. I mean, I've had friends who've jokingly said, "So you want to be the next Annie Leibovitz," and I didn't even want to admit I had no idea who that was until only a couple of years ago!

Having said all that, I find it difficult to describe what my style is, except to say that with every photo I've taken I've really felt something. They're not all going to capture the emotion I was feeling at the time, but I've tried to express that as well as I possibly can.

There's a clear sense of reality and raw emotion – even loneliness – coming through this set of images, especially with the black and whites. Perhaps you've got a dark side you're unaware of?

I do love black and white photography. Maybe that comes from looking at very old, vintage photos, which I enjoy. I'll routinely drop the colour out of photos I've taken, just to see if anything unexpected is revealed. Often an image will jump out at me when I do that. It's interesting how some things demand colour though, like my image here (left) of the bus and the brick wall. That shot just wouldn't be as exciting

“Honestly, I think it's good to have a bit of a dark side. It can help you take better photos”



» IMAGES

SCHOOL BUS
» (TOP LEFT) Shot with a Canon 50D; 50mm lens; 1/320sec; f/10; ISO 320

CHRIS ISAAK
» (ABOVE) Shot with a Canon 50D; 50mm lens; 1/320sec; f/10; ISO 320

JAMES BRIDGES
» (LEFT) Shot with a Canon 5DMkII; 100-400mm lens; 1/100sec; f/5; ISO 1600

without that tonal contrast. But I do love the grungy, dark emotionality you can achieve through black and white. And, yes: I freely admit to having a dark side!

Honestly though I think it's good to have a bit of a dark side. It can help you take better photos – and certainly ones that can provoke more of an emotional response.

How did you fall into concert or performance photography?

I remember Cold Chisel were playing in town and I tried to get a media pass, but was turned down, I guess because I was freelance at the time and not commissioned by anyone specifically. A friend of mine was able to organise me one though, so I went along. I hadn't done any professional concert shooting before, but went in there for my allotted three songs – they were pretty strict on that – with my little 18-270mm Tamron lens on my Canon 50D and just shot away!

I remember mucking around with the settings and trying as many different



Nevada, “in searing 50-degree heat”. What happened there?

It's a long story. My friend did indeed take a shot of me nude in Death Valley, but it was just from the back. I have this thing where I sometimes do nude Christmas cards of me taken in weird locations. It started out as a joke, but I've done a few of them now.

It's funny you should ask me, though, because I was literally just this week a contestant on *Millionaire Hot Seat* – that show with Eddie McGuire – and I had to tell them something funny or weird about me, and my friend said, "Tell them the nude Christmas card thing!" So I took one along in my pocket and sprung it on Eddie! He took it from me, looked at it, and just went: "Why?"

I don't think it'll make it onto the show, but who cares? It's not like it was a close-up.

For more of Natalie's work, check out Manifestphotography.com.au – and if you'd like to have your work considered as a DP Newcomer, drop us a line via editor@dpmagazine.com.au

» IMAGES

WALLACES HUT, FALLS CREEK
» (ABOVE) Shot with a Canon 5DMkII; 24-105mm lens; 1/500sec; f/9; ISO 400

STOIC
» (LEFT) Shot with a Canon 50D; 10mm lens; 1/80sec; f/10; ISO 250

TONY JOE WHITE
» (BELOW) Shot with a Canon 5DMkII; 100-400mm lens; 1/160sec; f/5.6; ISO 3200

things as I could – I think I fired off about 500 photos in just three songs! – got home, looked at them and thought: "Shit, these are pretty good!"

My friend was really surprised too when I sent them through – she's a filmmaker from way back – and that helped me decided to stick with it.

What's your career dream for say five years time? What would you like to be doing?

Career-wise I'd love to be still getting paid for what I'm doing. That's half the battle, getting people to pay for good photography. I'd love to keep shooting music and performances because I really like photographing people that are doing something that THEY love. But besides all that I think I'd really love to just keep improving and photographing really nice pieces, even if it's just for me.

If you're being really honest, what aspects of your photography do you think you could improve on?
I'd really like to improve my landscapes.

I find that a bit more difficult. By which I mean larger landscapes, like the example (top) of Wallace's Hut near Falls Creek in the Alpine National Park. I feel as though I struggle when it comes to the really big landscapes. I also want to spend more time honing my portrait skills, as well as becoming more experienced with studio lighting. Those would be the three main areas.

Where do you stand on post-processing? How much is too much?

I'm not a big fan of too much post-processing, although I think it's the individual photo that will determine that. People do tend to go a bit too crazy with HDR and too much colour, so I try to let the picture dictate that, while keeping it as true as possible to the scene. If anything I like to draw colour away from my photographs. The exceptions, and there are a couple even in my collection here, are when it's an art photo or something abstract. But generally speaking I like to leave well enough alone.

Your website mentions that you once posed nude for a shoot in Death Valley,

