



## COMFORT & JOY



**Christmas Swim by Slim Aarons, 1954.**

The model in the above photo has been widely misidentified on Instagram as Katy Perry. It is actually Rita Aarons, wife of 1950s and 60s society photographer Slim Aarons. The success of the shot resides in Aarons's ability to merge fantasies of the American dream; in this case, somewhat surreal Christmas opulence combined with the ease that wealth and warm climate afford. The practicality of achieving the shot was another thing entirely. The tree was hell to anchor to the bottom of the pool, and Rita, supposedly basking in the warm glow of a California sun, was cold and uncomfortable on an air mattress surrounded by pine needles and clumps of floating dirt.

Aarons enjoyed a long career shooting the denizens of high society in luxurious settings. He came to be invited into such an intimate circle by assuring his photographic subjects he was one of them. In fact, Aarons had been born in a New York City ghetto to impoverished estranged parents and, as a child, been shunted from household to household. Aarons left the unhappiness of his early life behind by reinventing himself, refusing to be chained to circumstances he found joyless. To see more of what came after his transformation, click [here](#).

## IN THIS ISSUE

Comfort & Joy.....	1
PHSC Presents.....	2
Photo Book 101 .....	3
Streamables .....	4
The Overseas File .....	5
Equipment.....	6
Web Links.....	7
Zooming .....	8
Ivy and Izzy .....	9
Classifieds.....	10

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**Pictured above:** When shooting, Slim Aarons arrived with a stainless steel briefcase in which a single Leica or Nikon camera, his favourite lenses, a light metre and just enough Kodachrome film for the shoot were carried. We guess his Leica choice would have probably been the M3 (1954-1967), in circulation at the time. The above is the 1955 version (21.4oz./610g with film, shown here with the Leica Summilux 50mm f/1.4). Of course, any Leica would have been just the right bespoke camera for capturing the rich, famous and sought after. For more Leica M3 details go to [www.kenrockwell.com/leica/m3.htm](http://www.kenrockwell.com/leica/m3.htm)

# PHSC PRESENTS (VIRTUALLY)

## Queen Victoria's 1894 Christmas Feast



**Queen Victoria was known for having a healthy appetite and delighting in lavish dinners of all kinds. Christmas was a time to pull out the stops but the mounds of food in this video may leave you wondering if you'll ever be hungry again.**

We're getting into the spirit of the festive season with a comestible offering, a video detailing the 1894 royal Christmas feast enjoyed by Queen Victoria and close members of her family at Osborne House, a royal holiday residence on the Isle of Wight. Since many contemporary North American traditions come directly from choices Victoria and her husband Albert made to commemorate their top-of-the-Empire status almost two centuries ago, we thought some idea of just what those original customs entailed might be an inspiration, or maybe even a modifying influence, for those trying to figure out their own celebratory kinks.

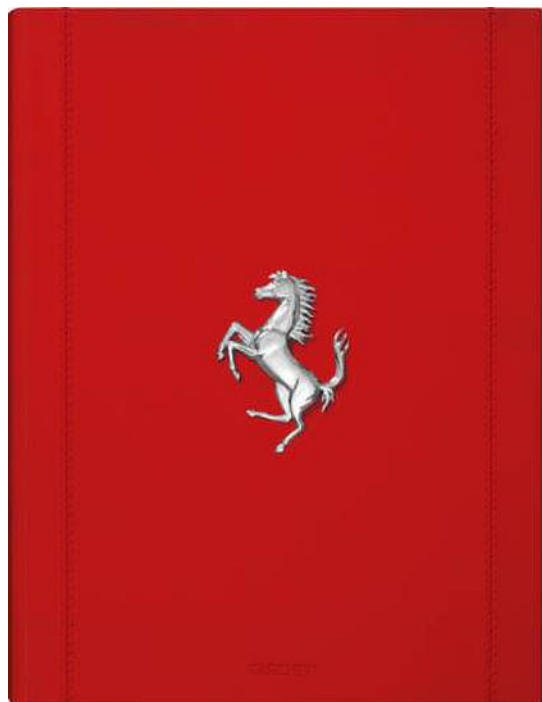
After watching it, you might wonder how an average royal female in a tight whalebone corset was able to eat the several heavy courses revealed in the video, many of which were made up not of single but of multiple rich dishes. Keep in mind that the season also brought with it a dizzying array of other lavish dining occasions where invited guests were required to do justice to more heaping piles of expensive food. Here we mention a bit of Victorian trivia not for the squeamish: some chose to swallow tapeworm eggs, which would, upon reaching maturity, help out with excess calories. We're not kidding people, you can look this up. But you might want to put that off until way after you've eaten.

Some of our more historically-minded photo fans may bristle at the number of illustrated images in the video, citing how many photographs of the Queen were taken during her reign. We feel compelled to remind that the real Victoria looked nothing like Jenna Coleman, who played the young queen from 2016-2019 in the televised series *Victoria*. The historic Victoria displayed all the physical attributes of the previous king, William IV, whose throne she would inherit: beady eyes and a beaky nose in a pouchy, jowly face. If you consider that the belief in physiognomy (physical attractiveness reveals character) in the era was rampant, you can see why court painters like Franz Xaver Winterhalter and Edwin Landseer did their best to "stage" Victoria's appearance on canvas. And one could hardly call the cartes-de-visite of Victoria, Albert and the kids, circulating courtesy of John Jabez Mayall, revealing portraits. The carte's tiny proportions were pretty good at obscuring anybody's less attractive features.

So enjoy the video, have a safe and happy holiday, and take a word of advice from us: resist hanging your tree from the ceiling like they did, and possibly still do, at Windsor castle: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=pQW9eZXApzg-](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pQW9eZXApzg-)

# PHOTO BOOK 101

## The Book for a Garage Mechanic Who has Everything

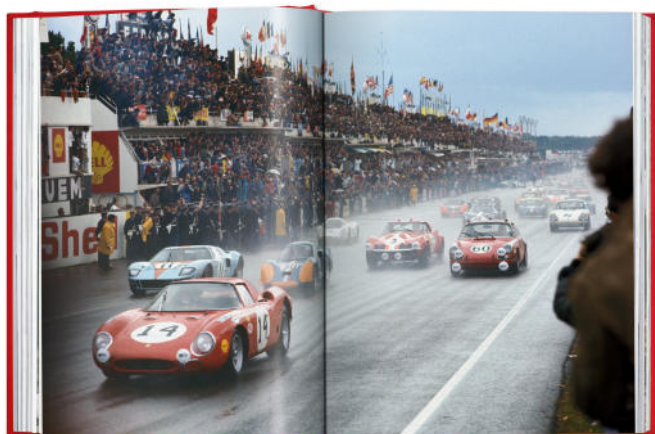


Covered in red leather with Ferrari logo, the book (left) can also come with the aluminium case designed by Marc Newson (right). The complete set is a modest car enthusiast's keepsake for \$60,000 US.

Leave it to Ferrari, the luxury Italian sports and racing car company, to come up with a luxury photo book. Bound in red leather with the corporate insignia, a rearing silver horse, on the cover, the volume comes in two versions. The cheaper model (above left) sells for \$6,000 US. It boasts a limited edition run of 1,697 printed copies and features glossy full-page images of the company's monumental history (we're not sure any photographers are credited; it seems not to have been an issue with a car company). If you're the type to sniff at the chaff upper-class pretenders are gifting their trailer park relatives, then you'd likely be a prime candidate for the deluxe Art Edition for \$60,000 US (sorry to disappoint, it's currently sold out). It's replete with even more signatures from company luminaries and arrives pristinely nestled in a coated aluminum and stainless steel book stand that is

made to closely resemble the Ferrari 12-cylinder engine.

The 29th Sultan of Brunei, with a car collection worth over 5 billion dollars US, probably got in early to get his Art Edition copy. We also bet that Jay Leno, Jerry Seinfeld and other pricey automobile lovers have gotten theirs. But the real dilemma may arise when these proud owners wonder where to put the thing. Does it work in the living room? The den? Will it look out of place in the oak-panelled library? Is it going to impress if it's displayed in the garage in front of your Ferrari like your personal mechanic forgot to put something back during servicing? Yes, like most things we tend to buy, the real problem is storage. For those interested in seeing the \$60,000 US ego-massage-plus-stand being made, check out the following: [www.taschen.com/pages/en/company/blog/1321.the\\_making\\_of\\_ferrari.htm](http://www.taschen.com/pages/en/company/blog/1321.the_making_of_ferrari.htm)



# STREAMABLES

## You May Not Want to Have a Dickens of a Christmas



**Publicity still from *The Man Who Invented Christmas* (2017). Let's get real. Dickens didn't invent any Victorian Christmas traditions. Those come to us from author Washington Irving and Queen Victoria.**

The season for Christmas movies. You probably have your favourites. One seemingly eager to join the classics is *The Man Who Invented Christmas* (2017), available on Netflix. It stars Dan Stevens, formerly of *Downton Abbey*, as Charles Dickens, the celebrated author of *A Christmas Carol*, and features that capable Toronto-born thespian, Christopher Plummer, as Scrooge. If you notice that the screenplay was written by Canadian author and actress Susan Coyne, who's constructed a plot that professes to reveal the story behind the story, you're probably thinking you can keep the family occupied with something uplifting, entertaining and educational while you bang out festive chow in the kitchen.

Dickens is portrayed as a decent guy trying to provide a loving wife, children, a coterie of housemaids, house renovators and his parents with an aspirational middle-class Victorian Christmas by writing a smash-hit Victorian Christmas novel. We watch as he slowly forms the character of Scrooge by drawing together bits of random conversation with seedy acquaintances. We are gradually introduced to a dark aspect of his verifiable past: as a pre-teen, he is forced into child labour in a factory that makes and bottles boot blacking. This, we are told, is because his parents have been ripped away and carted off to debtor's prison. The plot functions to have adult character Dickens come to terms with his abandonment as a child, to see the wisdom in reforming his new literary character Scrooge, and above all, to become a better man by forgiving his feckless but lovable parents.

It's an engaging costume melodrama partly because Plummer is so good at being Scrooge. However, it helps

massively if you know nothing about real-life Dickens the man. Because if you do, you're aghast at the attempt to rejig the author's life. Of course you understand why Coyne has done it: you can't really stuff a sweetly sentimental seasonal tale with irredeemable villains. But Coyne has the facts undergo as much renovation as a tasteful London townhouse. Here's what really happened: Charles ended up in child labour because his father, a pretentious failure living beyond his means, thought getting his small son a job at a blacking factory was a great way to avoid employment for himself. He thought, in typical Victorian fashion, that it's nothing for a child to work ten-hour days, six days a week. It's only after Charles joins the underage factory labour force that dad Dickens is removed to a house of correction for the bankrupt. One wonders what Dickens senior was doing with his son's take-home pay if he wasn't paying down debt.

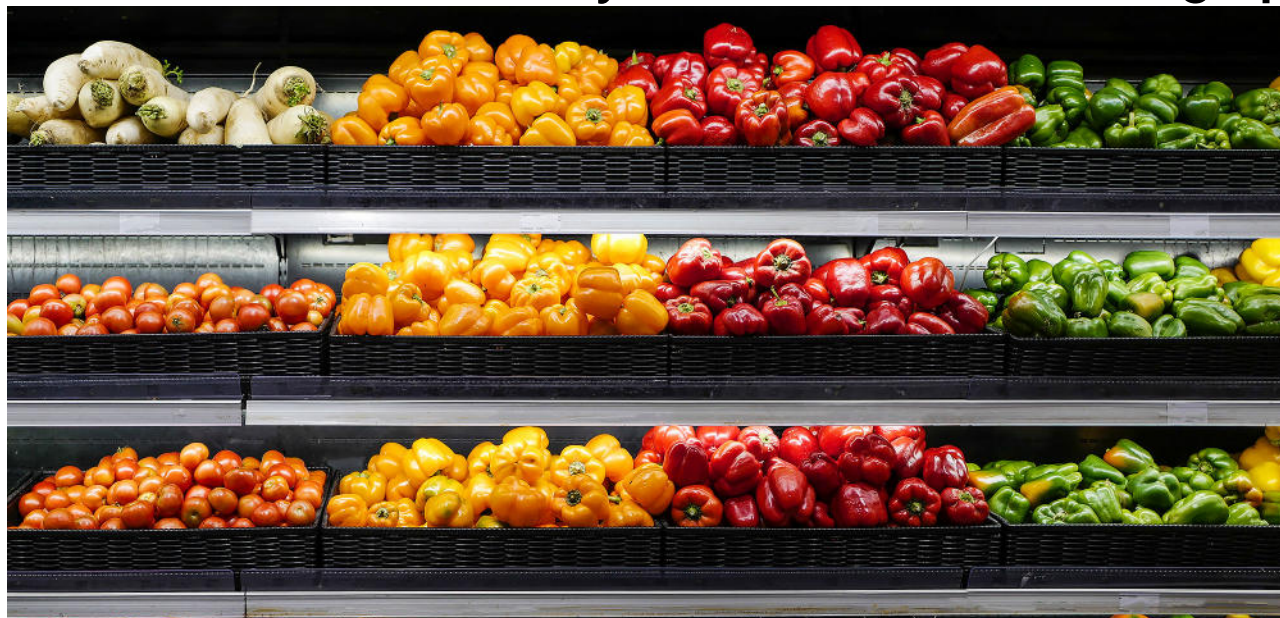
Coyne playing Jenga with the details extends to Charles as well. Supposedly a loving husband to wife Kate, Charles actually sprouts affections for two of Kate's sisters, Mary and Georgina, the former almost simultaneously with his marriage to Kate. Getting older, he gets around to having an affair with a much younger actress named Nelly (Ellen) Ternan. Dickens eventually manages the dick-ish move of withdrawing household funds from loyal Kate at the same time as he writes generous cheques to his mistress. This does not escape the notice of his adult children who collectively think dad is a remarkably stellar cad.

One might say naive is the reader who thinks a writer possesses the same virtues as his characters. But should it impact enjoyment of the movie? I'll paraphrase Hemingway: it may not be accurate but isn't it pretty to think it is?

# THE OVERSEAS FILE

BY SONJA PUSHCHAK

## What's on the British Holiday Table this Year? Photographs!



Cardboard food on a British store shelf by Artur Carvalho for Getty Images, from *Food and Wine* magazine.

The above image may look like well-stocked store shelves but it's actually a photograph of a photograph. Tesco, a well-known British supermarket chain, has taken to placing photos of food on otherwise empty shelves for the holiday season. This substitution (we guess empty shelves tend to make shoppers panicky) is the perfect opening for revisiting the subject of Brexit. Brexit was the separation from the European Union the Boris Johnson government and pro-Brexit factions promoted. That was so the UK could escape the tyranny of cooperating with their major European trading partners. An escape that was touted as a paradise of promise and abundance for British citizens.

Let's review: what were Brexiteers promising? "There would be no down side to Brexit." "The day after we leave, we hold all the cards." "We can choose the path we want." "The UK would owe no money to the EU upon leaving." "A high-tech customs system will make for frictionless borders."

Oh yes, and don't forget the core issue hidden under "choose the path" romanticism: any EU citizens arriving in Britain after the March 29, 2019 deadline were to be subject to a different (read punitive and exclusionary) immigration regime. Boris Johnson's supporters were one-sided when it came to the open borders the original EU agreement contained. Sure, they loved the idea of swanning around Europe unimpeded but damned if they weren't annoyed to extend reciprocal privileges to EU citizens. Indeed, it seems Brexit was originally intended as a way to implement an immigration clampdown window-dressed as a yearning for "choose the path" national autonomy.

Consider this: the EU is an economic union made up of 27 member nations which trade tariff and customs free with

each other. It also has trade deals with Canada and the US. Britain leaving the EU made it very much the odd man out, cancelling out existing deals with all. Since Britain had been losing its economic primacy since the nineteenth century, put the devastating cost of financing WWII on top of that and the country was drowning in debt. Joining the EU in 1973 allowed Brits to have a large free market in which to sell things it made and from which to import things it couldn't make. The arrangement helped to put the nation back on its feet. But it only took a generation or two for people to forget why the agreement was there in the first place.

As it turned out, Britain didn't hold any of the cards in leaving as economic power in that part of the world is concentrated in the unified hands of the EU partnership. The British now have no choice of any path as the EU can and does dictate the conditions of separation. Goods no longer travel freely but are bogged down in red tape and customs paperwork at the borders. The British government's high-tech customs systems were only a fantasy: imports like food and medical equipment sit at ports while a shortage of agents try to sort out the backlog by hand. The poor wages and treatment of immigrant labour in British trucking means that even when goods are cleared for delivery, there are no truck drivers. Those workers left for the EU where wages and conditions are better. One last thing: that bit about the UK owing the EU no money? The EU has enforced the clause that stipulates Britain honour its share of previous commitments, a bill of some 40 to 45 billion pounds. Payments are likely to continue until 2064 or even longer if Britain ever wants to ask a favour of the EU again.

Who knew that Brexit would be responsible for picture-perfect British dinners this December?

# EQUIPMENT REVIEW BY DAVID BRIDGE

## Open Me First and Get Ready to Feel Inadequate



### Geschenke – die man nie vergißt

**1950s Kodak Retina Christmas brochure excerpts (above), featuring skinny Santa with absorbent cotton beard.**

It's easy to mock stereotypical family images from the last century, when cameras were still a consumer item, but mid-1950s Christmas camera advertising cast a particularly onerous weight on would-be custodians of good cheer and family togetherness. Marketing had told us how to look, behave and what to buy, but now we were obligated to document our supposed familial perfection too.

Kodak's "Open Me First" demanded that, having defrosted the turkey and mixed a few sturdy drinks, the parental units should immediately "unbox" (no YouTube coverage here) and swing into action to record chaotic early-morning blizzards of destroyed gift-wrap with an unfamiliar camera and balky flash. And don't forget to include yourselves in these candid masterpieces.

Why did the marketing mavens of yesteryear want to make us feel inadequate? Did they think they could bully us, after we saw the results of our puny efforts, into buying fancier, more competent cameras? Was it just common knowledge that the low price-point camera you got could never produce the Hollywood-lit glam tableaux shown in the brochures? And the bigger mystery: exactly how was everyone Christian and white?

Advertising tag lines extolling the unforgettable gift; "the gift for years of better pictures" or the gift that keeps on giving, imply more lasting enjoyment of a more sophisticated piece of equipment. That idea gets the royal stink-eye from all marketing today - permanent is until the next iPhone comes out. Just make sure it's charged before you "open it first."



**Ads suggesting cameras were heirlooms came out every year. GE: "The Gift for Years of Better Pictures" (left), Kodak: "The Color of Christmas" (centre) and Kodak: "The gift you never quite give away" (right).**

# WEB LINKS

COMPILED BY JOHN MORDEN

## The rare and elusive Flexichrome process.

After finding a colour image identified as a Flexichrome, I just had to find out about the process: where it came from, when was it used and how it was done.

The search lead to an article written by Nayla Maaruf, Photograph Conservator at the Art Institute of Chicago, on how to identify a Flexichrome print. She accomplished this by eliminating all other colour processes in existence. She reveals the steps in her investigation in the following article:

[www.artic.edu/articles/907/identifying-the-rare-and-elusive-flexichrome](http://www.artic.edu/articles/907/identifying-the-rare-and-elusive-flexichrome)

Also found, the booklet *Kodak Flexichrome Process* (1950), fully instructional on how to make a Flexichrome print.

[www.photomemorabilia.co.uk/Colour\\_Darkroom/Hand\\_Coloured/Koodak\\_Flexichrome.pdf](http://www.photomemorabilia.co.uk/Colour_Darkroom/Hand_Coloured/Koodak_Flexichrome.pdf)



**Maja epañola (detail) by Josep Masana, Flexichrome print c1958 from a 1930s negative, Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya.**



**Scurrying Home by Alfred Stieglitz. The RPS journal first published photographs in 1896 in that year's Annual Exhibition listing.**

## Journal of the Royal Photographic Society

The Journal of the Royal Photographic Society is online with all 165 years of their journal covering the period from March 1853 to December 2018. The journal database is over 30,000 pages and with their on-line browser you can either read by issue or use the search function to list all the key words for your search parameters.

See it as a great resource on the history of photography unfolding on a month-by-month basis. Early on, the Journal was heavily into scientific and technical developments and many of the wider debates within photography, particularly before 1939. After 1939, the Journal tended to focus on aesthetic issues.

The Society's own exhibition catalogues and exhibition reports are a key resource for understanding photography's stylistic development, with photographs from the early 1900s not reproduced anywhere else: [archive.rps.org](http://archive.rps.org)

Take note: you may want to use a large screen when viewing the archive as their viewing program makes you want to enlarge stuff constantly. A thank you to the Australian Photographic Collectors' Society Inc. newsletter for suggesting this link.

## Another gift list for film photographers in 2021.

Nice to see DPREVIEW talking about equipment for fans of film photography. The PHSC has not reviewed nor recommends any of the items but having a look through the list probably won't hurt. The LED enlarger seems like a novel alternative to traditional enlargers and, speaking of creating prints, it is nice to see that Polaroid is still in the game with the Now+ camera. You might also want to take a quick look at the great retro packaging for the Kosmo Foto Agent Shadow Film.

Link: [www.dpreview.com/news/4933584971/buying-guide-the-best-gifts-for-film-photographers-in-2021s](http://www.dpreview.com/news/4933584971/buying-guide-the-best-gifts-for-film-photographers-in-2021s)



# ZOOMING

BY CELIO BARRETO



## A Show and Tell

Featuring photography's rare, curious  
and unclassifiable!

**DECEMBER 15, 2021 - 8:00 EST**

Want to talk about your latest, greatest equipment or image score? Bursting to let us know what kind of eccentric esoterica you've spent countless hours hunting down? Here's your chance! Contact our Program Director to reserve your presentation spot today at [program@phsc.ca](mailto:program@phsc.ca)

Register on Eventbrite for FREE tickets:

[www.eventbrite.ca/e/phsc-2021-end-of-year-celebration-show-tell-tickets-165372735303?aff=ebdsoporgprofile](https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/phsc-2021-end-of-year-celebration-show-tell-tickets-165372735303?aff=ebdsoporgprofile)

This online Zoom event sponsored by the Photographic Historical Society of Canada





send his photograph to people with whom he corresponded rather than meet them in person.

**Izzy:** Wasn't he terribly ill all the time?

**Ivy:** Some research on his life suggests he was a shy man who knew that claiming illness was an approved Victorian way of getting out of public appearances.

**Izzy:** Well, apparently he wasn't too shy to sit for photographers.

**Ivy:** He kind of hated that too. He was rather self-conscious about his looks and never really liked any of the portraits taken. He sort of apologized when he sent them to people.

**Izzy:** Was there something unusual in the way he looked?



## IVY & IZZY

### Checking out Darwin's Head

**Izzy:** The Victorian period.

**Ivy:** Yes?

**Izzy:** An intriguing era with intriguing personalities. A time when myth and photographic technology coexisted.

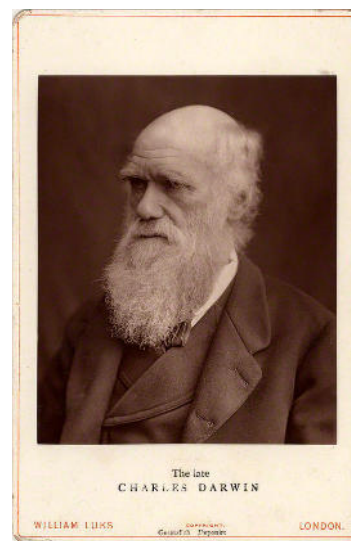
**Ivy:** Are you going to say so different from now? Please don't; you'll be incredibly wrong. But if you want to talk about Victorians and photography, why not start with Charles Darwin?

**Izzy:** He's not the first person that comes to mind.



**Charles Darwin by Elliot and Fry, 1874, Cambridge University Library.**

**Ivy:** Actually, Darwin was an enthusiastic collector of cartes-de-visite. He also was a basic homebody who preferred to



**Charles Darwin, possibly a Woodbury type by Lock & Whitfield, 1877, National Portrait Gallery, London.**

**Ivy:** No. Darwin looked pretty much like any average senior Victorian gentleman with a beard. Though he was probably sensitive about what his expression conveyed. He saw there was a universal language in facial expressions that had developed during evolution which prompted him to write *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872). He may have tried to have his own face say something positive when posing for the camera. Of course, how much of that worked underneath a serious crop of chin decor is debatable.

**Izzy:** What did other people think of his portraits?

**Ivy:** Far from thinking Darwin lacked character, those who received Darwin cartes read complimentary things into them. Like the time a German psychological society received his portrait and said his head had "the bump of reverence."

**Izzy:** What, like a priest or something?

**Ivy:** I'd say it was a Victorian compliment for a guy who exhibited a priestly devotion to research.

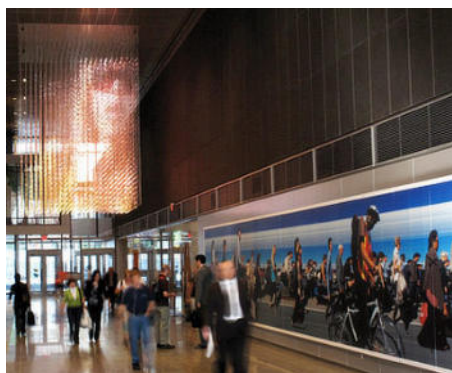
#### Sources

*Darwin's Camera: Art and Photography in the Theory of Evolution* by Phillip Prodger (2009).

# THE CLASSIFIEDS

COMPILED BY JOHN MORDEN

## Outdoor Exhibits



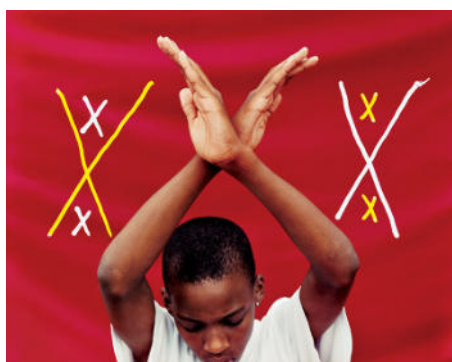
The Entire City Project  
by Michael Awad

### ARTWORXTO: Toronto's Year of Public Art 2021-2022

ArtworxTO: Toronto's Year of Public Art 2021–2022 is a year-long celebration of Toronto's exceptional public art collection and the creative community behind it. This exciting new initiative supports artists and art projects that reflect Toronto's diversity, establishing more opportunities for the public to engage with art in their everyday lives.

[www.artworxto.ca/  
?artworkTypes\[\]=Photography](http://www.artworxto.ca/?artworkTypes[]=Photography)

## Galleries



### BULGER GALLERY Wendy Ewald

#### The Pictures Woke the People Up: Canada, Colombia and American Alphabets

Ewald emphasizes a method of collaboration that challenges the distinctions between photographer and subject. Her goal is to provide the vision of her subjects rather than merely make images of them. In her work with children and women, she encourages them to record themselves and to articulate their fantasies and dreams. Until January 15, 2022; to book a visit, click [here](#).

## Competition

### THE PREFIX PRIZE

The Prefix Prize is an annual prize awarded to a professional photographic artist of any nationality. Presented by Prefix Institute of Contemporary Art, the prize consists of three components: a cash prize of \$2,000.00 CDN, a publication, and an exhibition—all in the month of May on the occasion of the Scotiabank Contact Photography Festival. The Prefix Prize will be awarded to an artist at any stage of their career who has yet to receive recognition. Deadline is December 20, 2021. For details on how to apply:

[www.prefix.ca/prize/](http://www.prefix.ca/prize/)

## Holiday Gifts



### PHOTOED COFFEE + MAGS = BLISS Photo Holiday Gifting in 2021

Coffee and magazines: the perfect coupling for Canadian photography lovers! Who wouldn't want to #ShopLocal and support TWO female-led independent businesses while feasting the eyes and the palate? This special offer of a year's subscription (3 fabulous issues) of PhotoEd and a 300g bag of Sparkplug Coffee, a Toronto-based e-commerce business that delivers fresh roast, fair-trade coffee to your door, can be yours for \$78. Direct link to purchase:

[www.photoed.ca/coffee](http://www.photoed.ca/coffee)

(Offer available ONLINE only. RRP \$78. Shipping included. 3x/year. CANADA ONLY.)

## Galleries



Female Ornamented Sabethes  
mosquito by Gil Wizen

### ROM Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2021

The longest-running and most prestigious nature photography competition in the world returns to the ROM. The exhibition's stunning images allow visitors to experience nature in vivid detail and get up close to some of the world's most extraordinary species, the lives they live, and the challenges they face. Whether you're a nature lover, aspiring photographer, or simply love a perfectly captured moment, you will be inspired by the talent and technical expertise required to photograph such rare, emotive, and surprising glimpses of the diverse life on this planet. Runs until April 18, 2022.

[www.rom.on.ca/en/exhibitions-galleries/exhibitions/wildlife-photographer-of-the-year-2021](http://www.rom.on.ca/en/exhibitions-galleries/exhibitions/wildlife-photographer-of-the-year-2021)



### ROM - My Pandemic Story

Through a variety of media, Ontario's kids and teens have shared stories of what it's been like to live through the pandemic. Free to the public. Runs until March 27, 2022.

[www.rom.on.ca/en/exhibitions-galleries/exhibitions/mypandemicstory](http://www.rom.on.ca/en/exhibitions-galleries/exhibitions/mypandemicstory)