

SPRING 2023

THE OKLAHOMA
PHOTOGRAPHER

A MAGAZINE OF THE PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHERS OF OKLAHOMA

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SIX great
Programs
You don't want to miss this!

Artificial
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Human creativity vs AI



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The Oklahoma Photographer Magazine - Volume 66, Issue 1
Elise Breeding, Editor - editor@ppok.org



Printed by Marathon Press (800) 228-0629
1500 Square Turn Blvd. Norfolk, NE 68701

The Oklahoma Photographer is a publication of Professional Photographers of Oklahoma, a 501c6 organization. Complete financial information and 990 forms are available to any member of our regional states by contacting Michael Scalf Sr, Executive Director at P.O. Box 1779, Blanchard, OK 73010

I am so incredibly thankful to have had this creative outlet the last few years. I took some time off from my photography business for a couple of years to focus on my health and family, only accepting current clients and small jobs when I felt well enough to do so.

I was in a place of inconsistency, and serving my photography community by gathering and organizing content has filled a hole in my life that I didn't know I had. I needed something consistent, and I again, looking back, I am so thankful.

Thank you for reading and enjoying it with me. I hope you have been inspired or encouraged by something in each issue.

Our goal at the Professional Photographers of Oklahoma is always to bring value to our members - through programs (free and discounted) and guest speakers (local and not), as well as this publication, print competitions and our goals of creating more

EDITOR'S NOTE



On the Cover.....

"This Elevator is Full"
Brandy Moton, CPP
Tulsa, OK



free meet ups for learning and networking.

Our president, officers and board members have short terms on the organization's board of directors. This means that as we transition leadership, and newly elected board members join the planning meetings, we hope you'll stick around year to year and see the value in supporting the organization with your membership.

Just as the technology, equipment, and software we use on a regular basis are changing and adapting to our needs as photographers; PPOK promises to try to do the same. If you have ideas on what would bring you more value as a member or types of programs you would like to see, please feel free to share! My email address is listed below. I'm happy to share your thoughts with the board and/or point you in the right direction of who to contact if you have a specific question.

Chris Urias and his team have some really great programs coming April 1st and 2nd, more information can be found in this issue. We'll see you there!

Elise Breeding, M.Photog, CPP
editor@ppok.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Chris Urias
2023 PPOK President



I can't believe how time seems to fly. Just two years ago most of us were thrown off track to deal with Covid as many businesses scrambled for a way to overcome it.

Some were able to take an extended break and revamp their business formula while others could not sustain the pandemic and were forced to find other ways to create income.

For those of us who have survived and for others who came into the market in 2020 to make ends meet, there are several innate qualities that today's photographer possesses - the will, the drive and the fortitude to stay afloat.

In some cases, many photographers expanded their business beyond pre-pandemic levels. In other instances, some are still navigating a slippery path to find their mark or niche in the photography landscape.

Whichever category you fall in, our state organization too went through some growing pains after Covid - from having zoom board meetings and having a zoom judging convention. It hasn't been easy, but we are still here. And we are still in the midst of offering current members more value to their membership! From

offering periodic meetups in all parts of the state, lowering the membership fee of first time members, posting more images and information on our website and social media, to making our website more user friendly and impactful.

We are in a unique time. This year the PPA organization has decided to offer its members the opportunity to submit images up to eight times over the course of the year to be judged. No longer will state affiliates be the prerequisite to score well and then take those images to IPC.

For now, we still want to reward photographers who enter at the state level, and we want to see a bountiful number of entries at PPA as well. Obviously, we have to embrace change, we took Covid head on, this new change with PPA will be a small speed bump in the road for our state organization.

I'm a photographer that is juggling a full-time job of teaching and photography. I love both, but can do only one full-time.

I teach high school English, and I am always using acronyms to teach young high schoolers about a specific topic. I guess if we want to know our teenagers, we've got to learn their language. If we want to survive as a business, we have to find ways to be diverse, to expand, to hustle, to CREATE.

My acronym for photographers,
Continued, page 4

President's Message Cont'd

no matter your level, is to CREATE.

C = celebrate that you have survived and celebrate your community. You have given back to your community in many ways, from giving your time, products, fundraisers, to joining forces with other businesses. I think it's ok to have an appreciation party at your business. Invite past customers and businesses who have supported you through the years and thank them.

R = rekindle old and past acquaintances. Maybe it's the local bank down the street that you might have reached out to a few years ago to do their administrative head shots, but for whatever reason it didn't pan out. Maybe this year there's a new person for that position and he/she is willing to spend a little more money and impress the boss. Maybe you incorporate a church directory into your line of work, the City Council, a school, a casino, a new boutique or hair stylist, who just opened up her new store. Just because someone said no once doesn't mean there's not a need this year, right?

E = Educate and expand your portfolio. Yes you can learn online, but that's not the only way to learn. Immerse yourself in all educational opportunities - whether they cost or not. Texas School, WPPI, Photocon, your state and local guilds have a lot to offer and yes, even online. I've attended many seminars over the years where I've come away with wanting to incorporate something in my studio right away.

A = see yourself as an artist. See your work as art. If we are to separate ourselves from others, you have to

appreciate your work, especially if we want to make a living doing what we love to do. Do you have an answer to the question, why should I hire you or what separates your photography from the photographer down the street? We all know that we spend endless hours editing our images, or spend money attending a seminar, but is that enough?

T = toughness. In this business, photographers have to have a backbone because they are always being judged. I remember the old saying, you're only as good as your last photograph. Of course there are times when we seem to fall short because our expectations are set high. Maybe you didn't get the shot because of the "crying baby" in a family portrait, or the senior boy was just not into doing something creative. We have to regroup, learn from our shortcomings and be mentally tough when we don't seem to do our best or when we think we do, but the client doesn't spend the money that we think they should. We have to move forward and know the way to change the next outcome.

E = Effort, This may be one of the most important things. If I had a dollar for every wish related to photography, I would be a multi-millionaire, live comfortably, and watch the dollars pour in. If only it worked that way.

Our success depends on our effort to become the type of photographer we wish to become. We need effort to learn, to be efficient, to plan, to see, to create the life we want.

My challenge to you is to be the best photographer you can be this year -

CREATE.



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2023 SPRING SEMINAR

Event Registration

ways
to
register

Professional Photographers of Oklahoma April 1-2, 2023

- 1) on-line at www.photoxok.org by Mar 30th
- 2) Mail this form to: Michael Scalf Sr, P.O.Box 1779
Blanchard OK 73010 postmarked by Mar 20th
- 3) At the door (Options 1 or 2 saves you \$\$\$)

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____
 Name of Business: _____
 Business Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Cell Phone: _____ Bus Phone: _____
 E-Mail: _____

\$ 139.00 Full Registration (Non-Member).....\$ _____
 \$ 99.00 Early Full Registration\$ _____
 \$ 20.00 Social Only.....\$ _____
 \$ 75.00 One Day Only ___ Sat ___ Sun (\$110 after Mar 20th).....\$ _____
 \$ 95.00 One Day (non-member) ___ Sat ___ Sun (\$125 after Mar 20th).. \$ _____
 Total Amount Included With This Registration\$ _____

Check made out to PPOK enclosed -or- Bill my card

Card number _____
 Expires _____ CVV# _____ Billing Zip _____

Got Questions? Call or Text 405-815-7806
 or email michael.scalf@ppok.org

HOTEL

Holiday Inn in NW OKC, 6200 N. Robinson Rd
 Oklahoma City, OK 73112.
 Reserve your room at 405-286-4777 by Mar 16th
 to get your discounted room rate of \$94 (free breakfast).
 Just mention PPOK

2023 PPOK Spring Seminar

April 1-2

2023 Spring Schedule

Friday – March 31, 2023

7:00p Dinner & Social (arrive the day before and meet us for extra networking!)

Saturday – April 1

7:00a - 11:30a Registration Open
 8:00a - 10:00a Program: Kasey Alcott
 10:30a - Noon Program: Brian DeMint (*sponsored by White House Custom Colour*)
 Noon - 1:30p Lunch on your own or with a group
 1:30p - 4:00p Registration Open
 1:30p - 2:30p Program: Brian DeMint - Content Gathering (Bring your Cameras!)
 3:00p - 5:00p Program: Amanda Watson
 5:00p - 7:30p Dinner on your own or with the group
 7:30p - ????? Hospitality & Networking

Sunday – April 2

8:00a - 11:00a Registration Open
 8:30a - 9:30p Program: Kaelyn Gray & Travis Mendoza
 10:00a - 12pm Program: Mark Moore
 11:30a - 1:00p Lunch on your own or with a group
 1:30p - 3:30p Program: John & Cindy La Barge
 3:30p Have a Safe Trip Home!

Professional Photographers of Oklahoma's annual spring seminar is in central OKC this year! We will have our annual image competition in September. Along with a great lineup of programs, we also have several social events, which are prime opportunities for fellowship and networking with other pros from around the state. We hope to see you there!

Spring Quick Glance Schedule

2023 Saturday

Sunday

2023 Seminar Speakers	8a Kasey Alcott maternity	8:30a Kaelyn Gray/Travis Mendoza concert/events
	10:30a Brian DeMint fashion (bring your camera after lunch!)	10am Mark Moore mirrorless cameras and new technology
	3p Amanda Watson weddings	1:30p John & Cindy La Barge sports composites



Bold Bump Photography

Kasey Alcott Tulsa, OK

2023 seminar speaker

My photography journey started when I was just a little kid. Both of my grandmas always had some kind of camera in their hands as I grew up. I love now looking back through our family albums and seeing everything those dollar film cameras caught.

Honestly, I feel like they taught me most of everything when it comes to lighting and catching the moment. I have been in the industry for almost 14 years now, 7 years of it as a full-time photographer. I co-own a co-op studio in Tulsa, OK with my partner and we are working on expanding to also having an event center connected to the studio to host workshops, fashion shows, and other small events. Our studio has a huge 1000 sqft shooting room with different walls, sets, and cyc wall that we rent out to other creatives and then we have our own shooting areas just for us right in the middle.

About two years ago, I realized I really want to focus on motherhood. I love maternity



photos, newborns, and boudoirs. I think my reason for focusing on these is because I am a mother myself and I have been through many stages and kicking myself for not documenting every single step with all my babies. I don't want other moms to do the same. I'm here for them to make sure to capture that glow of pregnancy, remember the gift you created and make sure you don't forget who you are and what you look like at any age or season of life. My passion for photography is helping you see yourself at every stage!

In this class, I will show you how to create beautiful maternity photos in the studio using different lights, posing, and set ups. I love bold colors and dramatic lighting to give that Beyonce vibe we all wish we had during pregnancy and didn't even realize we actually do. I love when a momma-to-be gives me creative freedom from simple to extravagant, I'll show you how to get jaw-dropping images no matter the style and budget.



Longevity in Wedding Photography

2023 seminar speaker

Amanda Watson Oklahoma City, OK



authenticity and candor. Her work has been featured in Martha Stewart Weddings, BRIDES, The Knot, Style Me Pretty and many more.

Amanda began her career as a photographer in 2007, quickly building a reputation for her keen eye for detail and ability to perfectly capture the emotions and moments of a wedding day.

With a style that combines traditional

Amanda Watson has been documenting weddings for over 15 years across the country. A romantic at heart, Amanda yearns to capture life's purest moments with

and photojournalistic techniques, Amanda's images are both elegant and authentic, perfectly capturing the love and joy shared between her couples. Her attention to detail and ability to anticipate special moments ensures that every image is not just a snapshot, but a work of art.

Amanda's clients are often drawn to her ability to create a relaxed, comfortable atmosphere on the wedding day, allowing them to be themselves and enjoy the moment, while she captures it all on film.

She is dedicated to providing a highly personalized service, working closely with her clients to understand their vision and create beautiful, lasting memories of their special day.

Learn not only Wedding Photography 101 but also how to withstand the ebbs and flows of an ever changing industry.





2023 seminar speaker

Live Music Photography

Travis Mendoza & Kaelyn Gray
Oklahoma City, OK

Travis Mendoza and Kaelyn Gray will share the ins of the music industry and how photographers can get their foot in the door during this great Sunday morning program.

Additionally, Travis will share tips and tricks on how to capture in low light and unique perspectives.

Travis Mendoza is an intellectual property attorney representing clients in copyrights, trademarks and patents. In addition, he is experienced in creative portrait photography, portrait retouching with a creative edit, and concert photography.

He also has direct experience working with modeling agencies, brands,



and artist management teams. Through his years of experience, he is familiar with the legal aspect of photography, building cold connections, and creative editing.

Kaelyn Gray is



the Marketing Manager at three OKC event venues: Tower Theatre, Beer City Music Hall, and Ponyboy. Prior to, she worked in artist management with Grammy/Emmy winning artists and international touring acts.

She worked alongside photographers and videographers on a daily basis for her clients and did concert photography herself on occasion.

Through her years of experience, she is familiar with what artist teams look for when hiring photographers and what they can do to stand out.



Level Up Your Senior Sessions

with Artistic Composites

2023 seminar speaker

John & Cindy La Barge
Manhattan, KS



From developing the concept to creating a one-of-a-kind wall art, John and Cindy La Barge will share their success in offering Artistic Composites to their clients.

As an add on to a senior session, John will demonstrate the process he uses in lighting and posing the subject to tell their story, and the steps it takes in building one.

These composites are not just for athletes; musicians and dancers are perfect activities to help commemorate a senior year.

We will also touch on our sports schedule senior posters for high school sports. One poster session can create opportunities to add on



banners, big heads, and yard signs to increase your revenue opportunity. This is also a perfect time to wow the senior athletes and give you an opportunity to book a senior session.

Beginning in 2001, John and Cindy opened their studio, J&C Imaging. What started as primarily sports teams, event, and commercial photography, quickly expanded to include families and seniors.

John is past president of the Kansas Professional Photographers Association and Cindy is currently vice president of KPPA. Both serve as PPA councilors of Kansas and are ASP members.

Their studio is in historic downtown Manhattan, KS.

John La Barge M. Photog., Cr. Photog.
Cindy La Barge Cr. Photog.



Creativity: in Theory and Practice

Brian DeMint Joplin, MO

2023 seminar speaker



Brian DeMint is an art/fashion photographer based in Joplin, Missouri. Formally trained as an oil painter, he made the switch to photography in 2004 and is self-educated in both photography and digital manipulation. He strives to create visually striking imagery emphasizing expressive color and unique fashioning.

is often the main factor in building a style.

I rely heavily on ideas that I've found by studying art history. Movements like Arte Provera (poor art), Abstract expressionism and Neo-Dada resulting in melted plastic dresses, painted clothing and fruit bowls for headpieces, respectively.



Brian shares:

Conformity is the death of creativity.

A common theme throughout the programs I give is inspiring photographers to give themselves the freedom to be more creative in their work. To take chances and find their own artistic voices. For myself, it's been a slow evolution from starting with learning the basics of fashion photography to now, where I make/embellish most of the outfits, make makeup decisions and style the hair. I own no commercial backdrops and often still shoot with work lights from Wal-Mart. I've found that how uniquely you work



It sounds somewhere between high-brow and stupid as hell, but it's just recycling the past in a new way. There is no reason to try to reinvent the wheel.

Inspiration is everywhere, and when you apply this quote by the great Bill Brandt, it opens your mind to finding it. "It is part of the photographer's job to see more intensely than most people do." Thus, looking and studying with intent, not merely viewing.

Brian will be speaking on Saturday morning, and encourages attendees to bring their cameras for a couple hours of Content Gathering after our lunch break.



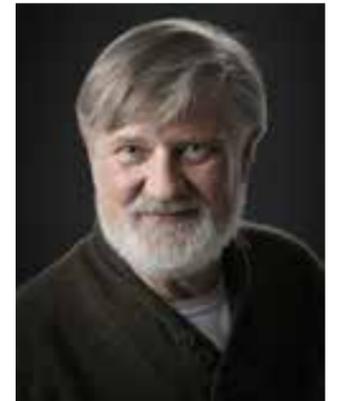
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The Pros of Mirrorless

The Ever-Changing Camera and Technology

Mark Moore Tulsa, OK

2023 seminar speaker



Mark Moore will be sharing new camera technology with us on Sunday morning-

Tahlequah, OK. He has been immersed in the ever changing photography industry for many decades.

specifically mirrorless cameras. He will cover pros and cons of mirrorless (mostly pros), features, some specifications, which cameras work best for varying shooting situations, crop sensor vs full frame vs medium format, and much more.

Mark is an expert photographer and skilled videographer with photographic experience including portraiture, product, real estate, aviation, commercial, photojournalism, industrial, education, public affairs, sports, illustration. He is a PPA Certified Professional Photographer and Certified Drone Pilot.

Mark is a creative professional with over 40 years experience working with a camera. He has a Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial Technology Graphic Arts from Northeastern State University in



Before opening his own studio in 2001, Mark spent the previous twenty years working for the University of Tulsa, Northeastern State University, Ruth Kelly Studios, as well as a Photojournalist for the Oklahoma Air National Guard.



He has since added product photography for IMAX Worldwide Imports and has been the marketing photography coordinator, adjunct art instructor and photography instructor to his resume of expertise.



Artificial Intelligence vs Human Creativity

The Debate over AI Chat and Image Creation Software

Elise Breeding *M.Photog, CPP*

I, like many of us, need to update my website. I have a photojournalism degree, but honestly, writing isn't my favorite outlet. I can stare at a screen with my hands on a keyboard and write, backspace, rewrite, backspace, adjust a few words... etc. until I finally feel like the words that were whirling around my head have been organized. No wait... I need some adjectives or adverbs plugged in...

Thus, started a conversation with my husband, Matt, an IT Project Manager about ChatGPT and other AI text writing programs. I had heard of this great little tool that could write information for you, but hadn't really considered it to do my bidding.

A few days go by where I'm still unproductive with my website, and he lays a printed article on my desk, complete with pictures. To prove a point, he gave ChatGPT a prompt to "write a blog post about 'The Best Cameras and Equipment for Beginner Photographers'", and it did just that.



Now, is it perfect? No. Did it have a few mistakes? Yes. Is it really that simple? Yes and No.

The program will do a better job at the task if you give it as much information as you can. After the first prompt, it gave topic sentences for each: the opening introduction, two informational sections, and a conclusion. Using the current outline, you then tell it to write each section with the detailed information it generated.

So with the information it created from his first sentence, his following prompts were:

- ~Write the introduction for this blog post.
- ~Write a few short paragraphs for this section of the blog post: "II. Types of Cameras for Beginners"
- ~Write a few short paragraphs for this section of the blog post: III. "Essential Equipment for Beginner Photographers"
- ~Write a short Conclusion

Here is the article it created:
As a beginner photographer, having the right equipment is crucial for capturing stunning images and developing your skills. With so many options available on the market, it can be overwhelming to know where to start. In this blog post, we'll take a look at the different types of cameras and equipment available for beginners, and offer recommendations for some of the best options out there. Whether you're just starting out or looking to upgrade your current gear, this post will help you make an informed decision and take your photography to the next level.

Point-and-shoot cameras

Point-and-shoot cameras are a great option for beginners, as they are easy to use and often come with a range of automatic settings that make it simple to take great photos without needing to understand the technical details of photography. These cameras are small and portable, making them a great choice for travel or everyday use. However, they typically have smaller sensors and less advanced features than other types of cameras, which can limit their ability to capture high-quality images in low-light or fast-moving situations.

Mirrorless cameras

Mirrorless cameras, also known as mirrorless interchangeable-lens cameras, are a newer type of camera that have become increasingly popular in recent years. They offer many of the same features as DSLR cameras, but are often smaller and lighter. They are also known for their fast autofocus and high-speed continuous shooting capabilities. However, they can be more expensive than point-and-shoot cameras, and the lenses can be more expensive as well.

DSLR cameras

DSLR (digital single-lens reflex) cameras are

the most popular type of camera among professional photographers. They offer the most advanced features and the best image quality, but they can also be the most complex to use. They have a mirror which



reflects light into the viewfinder, allowing the photographer to see exactly what the lens is seeing. They are also very versatile, allowing you to change lenses and accessories to suit different shooting situations. However, DSLRs are typically larger and heavier than point-and-shoot or mirrorless cameras, and can be more expensive as well.

Lenses

A lens is an essential piece of equipment for any photographer, as it determines the angle of view and the amount of light that enters the camera. Different lenses have different focal lengths, which determine how much of the scene will be captured in the photograph. For beginner photographers, a versatile lens such as a 50mm or 18-55mm lens is a great place to start, as it can be used for a wide range of shooting situations, from portraits to landscapes.

Tripods

A tripod is an essential piece of equipment for photographers, as it allows you to take sharp, stable shots in any lighting situation. Tripods are especially important for low-light photography and long exposures, as they help eliminate camera shake. There are many different types of tripods available

on the market, from compact travel tripods to heavy-duty professional models. For beginner photographers, a lightweight, portable tripod is a great choice.

Memory cards

A memory card is an essential piece of equipment for digital photographers, as it stores the photographs you take. Memory cards come in different capacities and speeds, and it's important to choose one that is compatible with your camera and has enough storage for your needs. For beginner photographers, a high-speed, high-capacity memory card is a good choice to ensure you don't run out of space in the middle of a shoot.

Camera bags

A camera bag is essential for protecting your camera and equipment from damage, dust and scratches. Camera bags come in many different styles and sizes, from shoulder bags to backpacks. It's important to choose a bag that is comfortable to carry and has enough space to hold your camera and all your essential equipment. For beginner photographers, a small shoulder bag or a backpack that can hold a camera and a few lenses is a great choice.

In conclusion, as a beginner photographer, it's important to have the right equipment to capture stunning images and develop your skills. There are many different types of cameras available, from point-and-shoot cameras to DSLRs, each with their own set of features and capabilities. Essential equipment for beginner photographers includes lenses, tripods, memory cards, and camera bags. By understanding the different types of cameras and equipment available, and making informed decisions about which to invest in, you can take your photography to the next level. Remember to always keep in mind your photography goals and the type of photography you want to do to make the best decision for you.

From here he went back and told the program to add attention grabbing headlines for each section of the post. Copy/Paste the whole thing, added pictures, printed and dropped it on my desk.

ChatGPT and similar programs will help you create text. Is it perfect? As I've said, No. The paragraphs became a little monotonous, the knowledge was very basic; but it was a good starting point, and I could now take that text, add or delete sections, change the wording and create an article or blog post for my website if I wanted to.

Now, this was all very helpful, and definitely interesting to sit and think of all the uses this technology could impose; BUT!!! Then I learned he also created the images in AI. Wait, what?? Now you have my attention.

I knew AI art programs existed. However, I had always only considered them to be used by video gamers. I believed AI art was just a fun avatar creation tool. Like this one, of myself, that I popped in with the prompt to imagine my headshot as a "warrior princess" just to test it out.



However with a little bit of research, I learned that I'm a bit behind on this AI knowledge. (It seems I was a bit more out of the loop last year than I wanted to admit.) So if you're like me, you'll find the rest of this interesting like I did, but if this is old news to you, I apologize.

I was, and still am, amazed at how realistic the images can be. With the prompt of "create an image of the milky way galaxy

over an old barn in the woods" and "colorful sunset over a mountain lake", my husband created the images on page 14, which up close look a little poster-like, and were simply created to be wallpaper images for his desktop computer.

With the prompt "an image of 3 different DSLR lenses next to a computer", the system



gave him these 4 options. The product is so realistic until you look closely and notice the program doesn't really manage text very well. Or perhaps the program doesn't have the licensing permissions to write brand names?

For images that look like a realistic photograph, it still has much to learn. For example, it didn't really know what to do with the prompt "an image of a mirrorless camera with



interchangeable lenses sitting on a colorful rock".

The first thing out of my mouth when I saw the images he created for his imaginary blog post was "where do the programs get their images?", you know: Are they just finding the images and making slight alterations and calling them their own? Or are the programs

actually creating their own images?

Without getting too deep or chasing a really long rabbit trail, a few facts include: ~AI art programs take input from a human and use an algorithm trained on a huge amount of image data to produce unique images. They have "learned" through the introduction of images, keywords, and metadata how to create what you tell it to create.

~There have been some lawsuits filed against a few AI software companies by artists claiming their images were used to train artificial intelligence how to create artwork similar to their own, and thus accused the programmers of stealing their copyrighted work for its own database. (To which they counter they do not store images in a database and have not stolen the images, only versions of the image metadata.)

There's MUCH more to the ethics discussion behind this unique new art form... I'm not much of a debator, so I don't plan to get into that.

It can not be denied how interesting this tool is. The image output, however, is pretty small- at least that's the case in the Midjourney Bot in which all of the images in this article were created. It typically creates images under 2000px on the long side, at 72dpi. I can upscale the images to receive a slightly larger file, but most images are still not very large.

As with all new technology though- it's here, it exists, it is the new technology of the moment. We're digital photographers, digital artists, creative professionals. We can embrace its existence or deny its relevance- either way it's worth spending an afternoon learning about.

THE OKLAHOMA PHOTOGRAPHER

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