



"The area catches my eye and something within me stirs, that something which excites me to make images, that place within where I allow my senses to flow easily into the glorious soup of self-expression. Once the lure is experienced, I'm addicted."

Megunticook Stream, Camden, Maine.

Fujichrome 100D, 4 seconds at f/11 with a Canon A2E, Canon 100-300mm lens. While feathering the moving waterfall, anything else moving during the exposure will also blur. I waited patiently for the wind to subside for the leaves to render sharp. A sturdy tripod is a must. Take advantage of mirror-lock-up features on cameras to reduce shake during long exposures. Photo © 1999, Chris Pinchbeck, All Rights Reserved.

By Chris Pinchbeck

I've passed this location hundreds of times before with a watchful eye, always telling myself I'll get back to it. This evening is different. The area catches my eye and something within me stirs, that something which excites me to make images, that place within where I

allow my senses to flow easily into the glorious soup of self-expression. Once the lure is experienced, I'm addicted.

Tonight is one of those nights; all the ingredients have come together. The light couldn't be more perfect, the subject matter, a waterfall on a small stream in my hometown, is one I love. I have my camera, film,

and tripod. I must stop and make images.

In a short time, the light has played off the waterfall, providing a potpourri of image opportunities. On the drive home, I reflect how diverse water can be in front of our camera and how our craft allows us to capture it effectively in so many different ways.

A walk up a local stream side or shoreline helps me practice the art of seeing. I find it important to hone my eye with a camera as well as without one on hand. Without a camera, I'm able to see the whole story, how it all comes together, uncensored. Our viewfinder censors. It is important for us to be comfortable and knowledgeable about the subjects we chose to create stories about through our imagery.

Technically and artistically speaking, water as a subject provides many exciting photographic possibilities. Consider its ability to move, its reflective qualities, unequalled translucent character, and the variety of sources and forms it can be found in.

Making images near water does not require much in the way of specialty photo equipment. However, proper planning and consideration of water's hazards are important for ultimate safety and enjoyment. Above all else, water creates terrain with which we're not usually accustomed to moving about. Rocks can be slippery, waves and rapids can be deceptively powerful, and the list goes on. Wearing a life vest when close to water with slippery or difficult footing is wise. Use sound judgment. If alone, make sure friends or family know where and when you will be making images.

In warm climates in and around water, I use either sturdy sandals or foot tennis shoes where my toes and feet are protected. In colder climates, I

carry and keep nearby a change of warm, dry clothes. I avoid wearing cotton clothing at all costs near water. Wet cotton against skin dangerously reduces our core body temperature quickly. If you love cold water environments as much as I do, I've found an investment in a pair of fisherman's neoprene hip-waders well worth the money.

My photo equipment consists of no more than my camera, an assortment of lenses, a couple of filters I'll mention later, and a sturdy tripod. When tripod legs get wet, and they inevitably will, I carry a dry towel to wipe them off when I'm finished for the day.

Be careful of all camera equipment around the ocean. Salt is very corrosive. I thoroughly rinse my tripod legs with fresh water if they take a dip into salt water. When I'm in wet environments between making images, I've often found covering

my camera with a shower cap or freezer bag helpful in preventing costly damage.

My filter selection is limited simply by personal taste. I prefer not using them when at all possible. I feel filters should be used prudently to aid the rendering of a composition on film, not hinder it. Practice field techniques for creating an image both with and without a particular filter and evaluate the results for your personal tastes. I do carry the following filters:

A polarizer can help eliminate unwanted reflections in the water. Polarizers work best when the camera position is 90 degrees to the sun (in other words the sun is off to either side of your shoulders). Be aware of the apparent contrast you may be adding to your image with a polarizer. With reduced reflection, colors on film appear more saturated.

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Megunticook Stream, Camden, Maine. Fujichrome 100D, 1 second at f/11 with a Canon A2E, Canon 100-300mm lens. The sunset light was bouncing off the side of an unpainted wooden building and pouring these golden colors into the falls directly below. Photo © 1999, Chris Pinchbeck, All Rights Reserved.

ed. The resulting saturation may deepen your "exposure" to the point where shadows lose detail and appear "blocked." It is easy to overlook bright reflections in water. Train your eye to be watchful for these hot spots which may detract from the composition.

I carry a warming filter (81a, b or c for varying degrees of yellow). This filter comes in handy in shady scenes where the color of the light temperature tends toward blue. A warming filter will rein in the "blueness" of a shady scene helping render "clean whites" (whites that look white, not cast in blue). Remember aesthetics, however. As the maker of the image, you may choose to create a feeling or mood. Good use of color can help in that process. Blues usually inspire feelings of cold or coolness, where warmth is usually represented by

reds, yellows and oranges. The only other filter in my equipment bag is a split neutral density filter. This is a great tool when the horizon is very bright as compared to the foreground subject. If an exposure is made for the "proper" rendering of the foreground, the bright background will be overexposed. Oppositely, if exposure is calculated for the background, the foreground

will be dark or underexposed. Using the dense portion of the split filter to cover the bright portion of the image



Megunticook Lake, Camden Maine. Fujichrome 100D, 1/2 second at f/16, Canon A2E, Canon 24mm lens. Enjoy the possibilities of image making! This image is made from using a homemade boom mounted on the stem of the canoe. The camera was attached to the boom using a Bogen Universal clamp and the image was composed through the viewfinder while the canoe was still on land. A long shutter release trails from the camera to my hand on the paddle. The slow shutter speed blurs the motion of the canoe through the water and the motion of the two of us paddling but the canoe itself remains sharp as the camera is mounted as if it were on a tripod. Photo © 1999, Chris Pinchbeck, All Rights Reserved.



Bridal Veil Falls, Yosemite National Park. Fujichrome Velvia, 3 seconds at f/22, Mamiya RB67, Sekor 90mm lens. This image was a product of watching and enjoying nature without a camera. By doing so, I found this rainbow happening only for five minutes in this water condition during the day. I returned the following afternoon, composed the image, waited for the rainbow to slowly form then fade away again. Photo © 1999, Chris Pinchbeck, All Rights Reserved.

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gradually transitioning into the foreground simply facilitates the reduction of the contrast range between the two elements of your composition. The film thereby renders detail throughout the image.

Use of shutter speed variations is an exciting aspect of shooting water. A fast shutter speed will freeze the motion of a powerful wave or rapid can portray a sense of power. A slow shutter speed feathers the movement of water. In rapids or waves, this may produce a pleasing dream-like quality.



Bugaboo Glacier Provincial Park, British Columbia. Fujichrome Astia, 1 second at f/16, Canon A2E, Canon 24mm lens. A split neutral density filter made this image possible. Proper placement over the bright background mountains allowed the scene to fall into the film's contrast range. The film was able to record detail in all areas without either blocking up the shadows or blowing out the highlights. Photo © 1999, Chris Pinchbeck, All Rights Reserved.

ty. Again, do your own personal test. Try running through a variety of shutter speeds on the same scene to examine the dramatic differences shutter speeds can have on moving water.

Keep in mind other techniques to use while making water-related images with slow shutter speeds. I enjoy taking my camera off the tripod to pan with the water or subject in the water as in the kayak image. Try using a slow shutter speed and panning motion with an incoming wave at the beach. How about a moonlit water-scape scene where the shutter is opened for an extended length of time while the camera is on the tripod? Often, the surrealistic results of slow shutter speeds in water images yield stunning photographs and our willingness to take technical "chances" sometimes results in exciting surprises. Multiple exposures of moving water can yield fun results.

I frequently find myself spending too much time investigating the world from my five foot eleven inch perspective. The images from the scene in the movie "Dead Poet's Society" where Robin Williams has his students stand on their desks while passionately recounting the words "Oh Captain, My Captain," evoke my personal push to find excit-

ing camera angles and fresh perspectives near water. Perhaps water's best asset is its ability to conjure our inner child. Around water, our innate attachment to the natural world is easily reached and we're brought back to the simple, exciting pleasures

of exploring, of filling our senses with sounds, smells, feelings, memories, and making images of the moment. Go explore your local stream or shoreline and let water jump-start your creativity!

"I frequently find myself spending too much time investigating the world from my five foot eleven inch perspective."

What's in the Bag?

Chris Pinchbeck uses an assortment of camera bodies for his nature photography. For 35mm equipment, he uses both Canon A2 and Leica R6 bodies. He uses his Canon for faster action images with Canon fixed focal length and zoom lenses; 24mm, 28-105mm and 100-300mm. He sometimes supplements natural lighting with a Canon 430 EZ flash. For his Leica bodies, he carries strictly fixed Lietz lenses, 24mm, 50mm, 100 macro, 250mm and macro bellows. His large format equipment includes a Linhoff Master Technika field 4x5, 75mm Rodenstock, 90mm Nikon SW, 120mm Schneider and 240mm Schneider lenses with 6x9cm and 6x12cm roll film backs. He uses a Gitzo Studex tripod with an Arca Swiss Monoball. His filters include split neutral density, slight warming (B+W KR3), and a polarizing filter. Chris currently shoots primarily Fujichrome Provia. For carrying, he uses both a Lowepro Super Trekker backpack and Pelican hard cases.

Bio-Snapshot
Chris Pinchbeck

Chris Pinchbeck is a commercial nature photographer living in Rockport, Maine. His work is published internationally and he teaches at The Maine Photographic Workshops. He is represented by Image Quest stock agency in St. Louis, Missouri. Chris' work may be viewed on his web site at www.pinchbeckphoto.com or at www.igstock.com.