Parting Shot



Following on from Mark Webster's 'Do we need depth?', I dug up this shot I did in April as part of a three-month photographic study on Cornish Rockpools. The majority of my work involves me staying dry and the rockpools provided the chance to get underwater shots while staying high and dry (often not so high). Having lived in Cornwall for three years, I was spoilt for choice on dive locations but it was the rockpools that really interested me. The species in rockpools go through daily struggles with predators, low oxygen and water level changes. Cornwall has over 300 miles of coastline to choose from, with exposed shores bearing the brunt of the Atlantic, to sheltered shores harbouring all manner of seaweeds and invertebrate life. One location in particular, the Helford, at low tide is a vast expanse of exposed shore with weeds and rocks holding some of the most biodiverse waters in the entire UK. Located in the mouth of the Helford estuary, it is truly a fantastic place to get photos above and below the water. Species like Cornish clingfish, Montague's crabs and beadlet anomies are not uncommon. I prefer to work with slow-moving subjects as it gives me time to compose the shot and experiment with settings and exposure. With the blue sky I knew I wanted a split shot but had to find a willing subject. Blue skies are big favourite of mine as they provide a nice contrast with the clouds and the subject matter rather than a blown-out white background. The shot could have worked underwater but splits often add something to the image and show the best of both worlds. Cornwall's shores are full of life and this edible crab found nearby had the habit of running straight towards the dome port and myself! With the subject being only centimetres below the surface of the water I can make full use of natural light, which I find gives it a certain quality that strobe lighting just doesn't seem to have. Getting as close to the crab as possible meant that it was a prominent feature in the image. Intense sunlight can be a hindrance as most rockpool creatures shun it but it lights up the entire rockpool opening up an unseen world. With the small crevices a compact can be very handy for use in rockpools: otherwise when using a DSLR finding the larger rockpools leads to more success. Donning a wet suit and getting into the larger rockpools means that you can compose the image a lot easier and don't have to lift a heavy housing which can be tiring after a few hours. You only have a few hours depending on what part of the shore line you work on; with the very furthest tips only being exposed for a short time, it's good to have an idea of where and what on the shoreline you would like to capture.

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Do you have an image which has a 'story within a story'?
If so we'd love to hear from you.
E mail us and yours could be
the next "Parting shot".
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