

FUJILOVE

LANDSCAPE PHOTOGRAPHY

20 TIPS WITH PAUL SANDERS



PAUL SANDERS

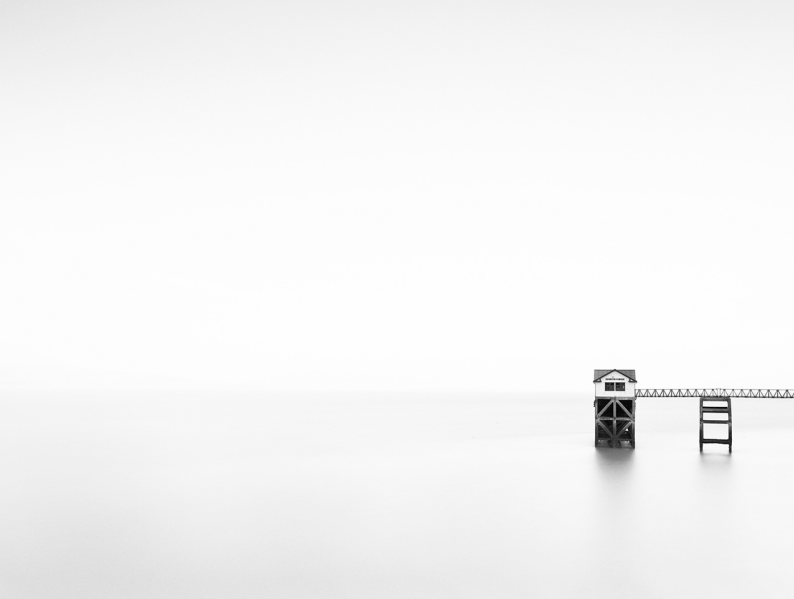
Paul Sanders is a professional landscape photographer based in the south east of England.

He started his career as a news photographer working on regional newspapers, before joining International News Service Reuters in 1998. After a four years covering major news and sport stories across Europe, he was recruited by The Times in London. With a clear vision of how good photography should be displayed in newspapers, he was appointed as Picture Editor of The Times in 2004, guiding the visual transition from broadsheet to the more popular compact format.

He left The Times in 2012 to pursue his passion for fine art landscape photography.

Paul's work reflects his emotional and spiritual reaction to the world around him. He believes that as an artist he has to have full connection with his subject. By being totally immersed in the moment, his work takes on ethereal calmness.

He is a Fujifilm X Series ambassador, leads workshops for Light and Land and is a judge for Take a View and The Pink Lady Food Photographer of the Year as well as supplying his work to corporate clients and writing for several photography magazines.



1 TAKE YOUR TIME

Landscape photography isn't about rushing around a location with your hair on fire; it's about savouring the place you choose to shoot and carefully selecting your spot before you even get your camera out of the bag. Never put your tripod up before you know where you are going to shoot from, otherwise you won't move. Slow down and enjoy the quality time you're investing in your work – the more you enjoy the experience the better your photographs will be.



2 COMPOSITION

Good composition is the key to great photography. Cartier Breton said, "The difference between a good and a great photograph is millimetres." That is so true. Fine tune your composition in camera at the location and don't rely on post production to sort it out. Pay attention to the edges of the frame. Is there an annoying branch creeping in? Look for leading lines that help create depth in your picture. Experiment with the rule of thirds but also experiment with breaking it. Don't be constrained by the rules; they are actually guidelines rather than rules.



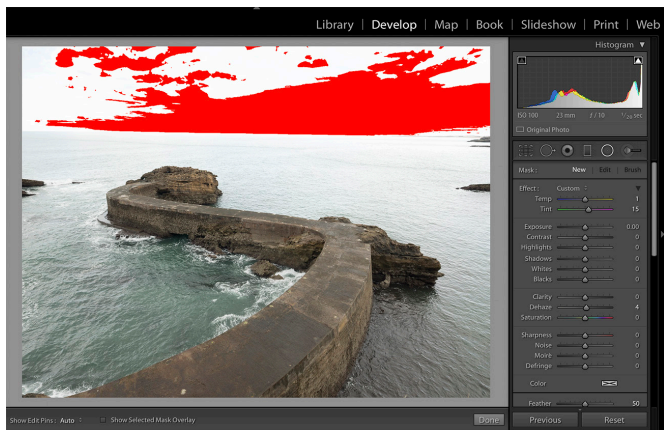
3 TRIPOD

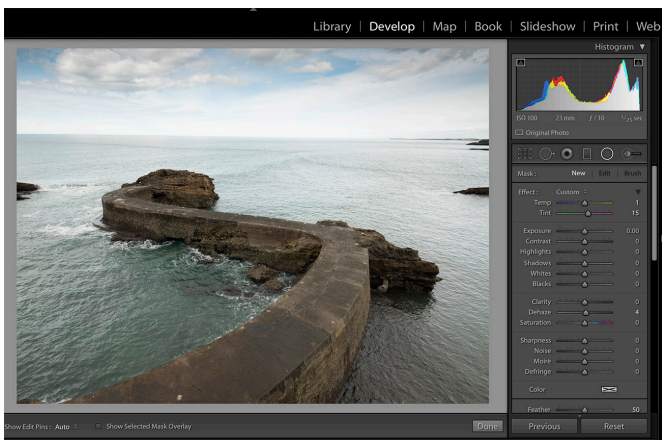
Always use a tripod; it will slow you down but it will improve the way you work, too. Using a tripod enables you to shoot at slower shutter speeds so you can convey cloud or water movement, which helps to provide your images with emotion and soul. It will also enable you to fine-tune your position very accurately, since shooting handheld means that you will never be in exactly the same spot twice. While we are talking tripods, buy a decent one – you don't want your beautiful Fujifilm camera and lens smashed because your tripod leg fell off!

4 FILTERS

Graduated neutral density filters are probably the most important accessory for landscape photographers. They enable you to control the contrast between landscape and sky so that the exposure becomes balanced and looks more pleasing to the eye. Don't buy screw-in filters, but invest in a filter system such as Lee. These filters slide into a holder and enable you to carefully position the graduation so that it works with your composition. Solid Neutral density filters will slow the shutter speed down too, which will allow the softening of water and blurring of clouds.

The first image below shows a screenshot from Lightroom, showing the image without a grad filter – the red areas are where there the highlights have been clipped. You can then see the same image, showing how the contrast has been controlled by the grad filter.







5 CABLE RELEASE

If you can, always use a cable release as it eliminates camera shake from the pressing of the shutter release button. If you don't have a cable release, you can use the self-timer set to a two-second delay to allow the camera to stop vibrating after the button is pressed.



6 GO OUT IN BAD WEATHER

There's no such thing as bad weather, only those of feint heart. Go out in the rain, snow, fog and hail. Wear appropriate clothing and cover your camera with a shower cap, or shelter it under an umbrella (but don't attach your umbrella to your tripod!). You'll be surprised by the results you get.



7 IMAGINE THE FINAL PRINT

Shoot with a view to printing the final image and try to imagine how it will look as a print. In fact, you should always try to print your work regardless of your genre of photography. There is something truly magical and beautiful about a print; it brings photography alive and prints are the only true archive that won't be killed by a failed hard drive or lost iPad.



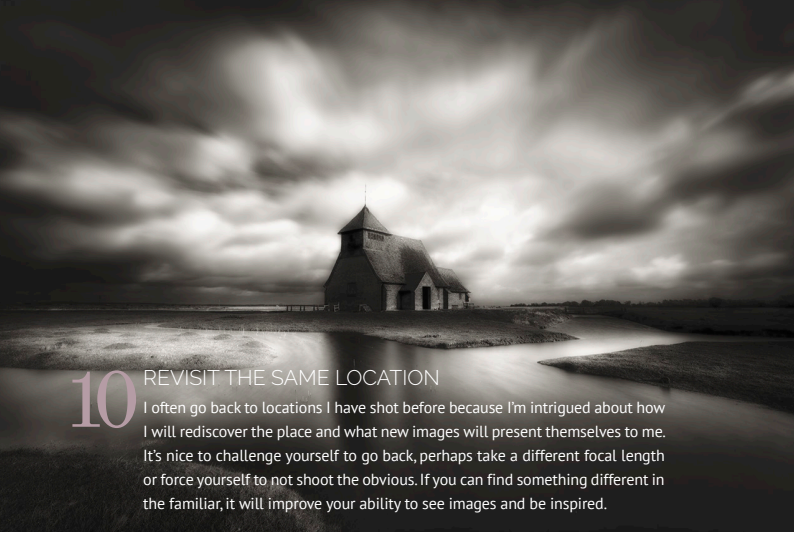
8 LENS CHOICE

Choosing the right lens can be crippling to creativity. Many of us have too many lenses in our bags, so try limiting yourself to only couple of lenses and don't worry about what you don't have, instead think only of the equipment you do have. Wide-angle lenses are great for big vistas with lots of wonderful foreground, whereas telephoto lenses will compress the perspective, isolating details and giving a different drama to your images.



9 SHOOT FOR YOURSELF

Forget about shooting for competitions, judges or Facebook likes; the only person you should please is you. Your images are personal and what other people think is totally irrelevant as to whether your images are good or not.



10 REVISIT THE SAME LOCATION

I often go back to locations I have shot before because I'm intrigued about how I will rediscover the place and what new images will present themselves to me. It's nice to challenge yourself to go back, perhaps take a different focal length or force yourself to not shoot the obvious. If you can find something different in the familiar, it will improve your ability to see images and be inspired.





11 TRAVEL LIGHT

Try not to get gear acquisition syndrome; more kit does not make you a better photographer! The more you have to carry, the more exhausted you will be when you arrive at your location, and the more you will ask yourself, "Can I be bothered?" I worked for six months with just a 14mm and an X-Pro1 – it was the most liberating time in terms of my photography.



12 CHOOSE YOUR MOMENT

Good landscapes are captured when everything comes together: light, tides, winds, composition and you. Choose the moment you release the shutter carefully. Don't shoot at 12 frames per second, but try shooting at one frame (maybe two) over five minutes. Study the clouds, light and landscape, watch the textures unfold and as they do, take your picture. Don't just machine gun the landscape and hope you got what you wanted.



13 ANGLE OF VIEW

Don't assume that the best image will come from your eye level. Raising yourself up or crouching down can dramatically alter the way a landscape looks, and will improve your photography.



14 BE INSPIRED BUT DON'T COPY

I'm inspired by many photographers and I have, in the past, tried to emulate their work, but going to a location and trying to shoot exactly the same image isn't good because it stifles your own vision and creativity. Don't be afraid, therefore, to put your own take on a familiar iconic location.



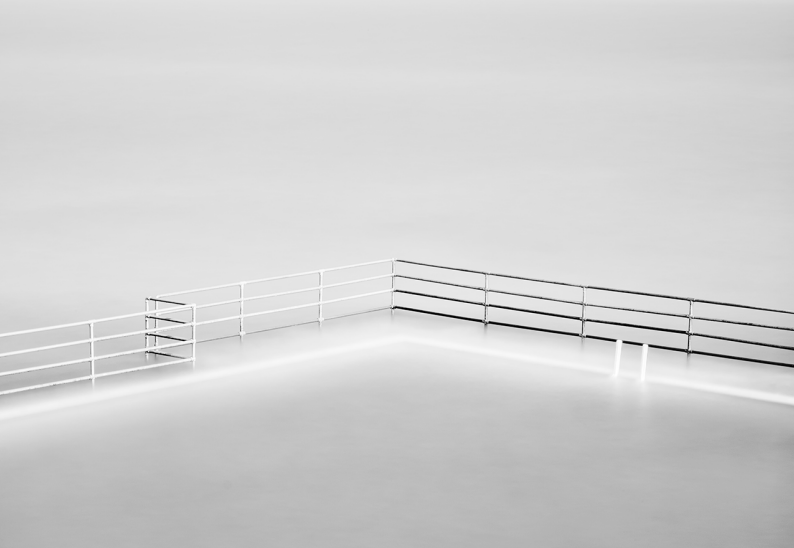
15 SEE THE PICTURE WITHOUT THE CAMERA

The camera only records the image – it doesn't create it. Therefore, make sure that you don't get your camera out until you know exactly what you are shooting and what lens you want to shoot it on. Don't let the camera become a barrier to your photography. If it looks good without the camera, it should look good through it.



16 IT'S ALWAYS THE RIGHT LIGHT

In my opinion, there's no such thing as bad light, there is only light. Whatever light you have will work for something and you should embrace exactly what light is available when you arrive. Rather than developing a negative attitude, approach it with an attitude of optimism and positivity.



17 BE FLEXIBLE

It's easy to get railroaded into going somewhere for a specific photograph but all too often what we hoped to find doesn't live up to expectations. When I find myself in this situation, I spend some time looking around at whatever else the location offers and then I challenge myself to produce four to six images on a theme. I may not ever do anything with them but it gets me out of the disappointment and opens my eyes.



18 GO LONG AND WIDE

Panoramas are really great way to change the way a place is seen. I often shoot them to get a better sense of place and scale. They are very simple – just turn your camera vertically and make sure your tripod is flat and level. I usually shoot on a slightly longer lens than I would for a traditional wide angle shot. Then, using the grid square on the back of the camera as guide, overlap each shot as you move the camera from left to right by about a half frame. Do not change exposure or focus while you do this. When you get home, select the images in Lightroom and select Photos>Merge>Panorama and Lightroom will stitch them together for you.



19 FOCUSING

To get front-to-back sharpness, use the depth of field/hyperfocal distance guide that Fujifilm provides. This allows you to maximise the depth of field your lens and aperture offer. This is the option in the screen display menu that brings up the blue line and focus scale on the EVF - it is really useful for calculating the depth of field you are getting.



20 SEPARATION AND SPACE

One important thing that is often overlooked is the separation of elements within your composition. Try giving the main features some space and try not to overlap them. Giving them space generates the feeling and impression of depth in your photographs.