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Camera Lens News



A newsletter for anyone who enjoys using, writing about, buying and selling Carl Zeiss camera lenses.

We make it visible.

Distagon T* 2,8/21 ZF – Indoor Shots with the New Ultra-Wide-Angle Lens

I had been looking forward to testing out the new Distagon T* 2,8/21 ZF for a series of indoor shots. When it comes to interior architecture, I am always drawn to the fascinating symbiosis between planning and design. Spaces need to be created in a way that allows people to change while remaining lively and vivid. The Distagon T* 2,8/21 ZF is the perfect tool to capture these kinds of impressions, and Berlin offers a wealth of potential subjects. All the images shown here were taken using a Nikon D700 and the Distagon T* 2,8/21 ZF on a tripod.

My first destination was the “Theater des Westens” venue. Having seen a play there a few years ago, I could still clearly recall the grandiose design of the interior. This time I had the space entirely to myself and could take my time trying out different perspectives.



The “Theater des Westens” is steeped in tradition and is one of Germany’s most renowned and beautiful theatres.

After I had spent quite some time searching for the right spot, I set up my camera on a tripod. Pondering the subject once again and enjoying the peace and quiet, I tried to remember how the theatre sounded as it filled up with a steady stream of chattering spectators. Then I pressed the shutter release. The result was this appealing shot that really encourages you to become absorbed in the details.

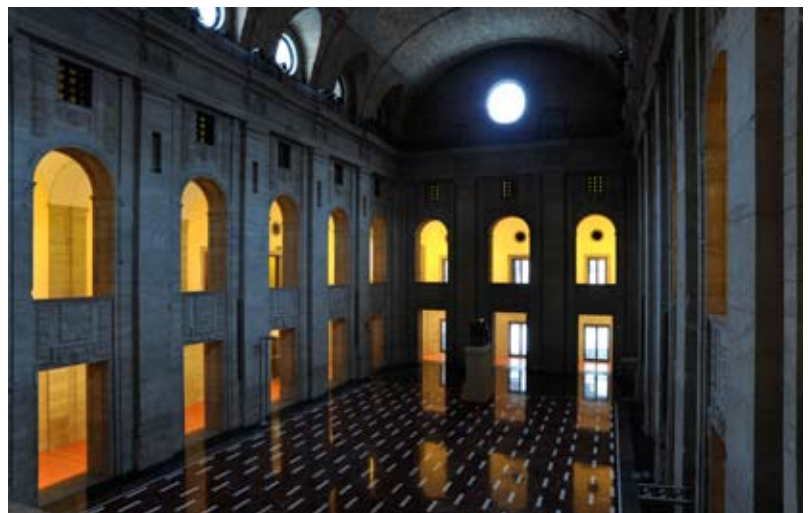
Another of my chosen subjects was the Westin Grand Hotel. I recalled how I had visited this hotel shortly after German reunification. I had been particularly impressed by the hotel lobby with its imposing flight of stairs and its modern design combined with traditional elements. I felt compelled to include this lobby in my series of photographs. A major plus of the Distagon T* 2,8/21 ZF in this case proved to be its uniformly superb



The Westin Grand is located in the historical center of Berlin.

performance over the entire field of view all the way to the corners of the full-frame sensor. The Distagon was a clearly superior choice here, especially compared to a wide-angle zoom lens.

The next shot shows the “Bärensaal” (Bear Hall) in Berlin’s “Altes Stadthaus” (Old Town Hall). A number of viewing angles were on offer here. There was still some daylight trickling into the hall through the skylights, and artificial light from the surrounding corridors was shining through the



The three-storey, barrel-vaulted ballroom known as the “Bärensaal” (Bear Hall) is located in the middle of the “Altes Stadthaus”.

archways. I went up to the gallery and positioned the camera on the tripod to take in the empty hall through the Distagon. When I subsequently saw the results on the monitor, I was impressed by how successfully all the chromatic aberrations in the image had been corrected. No color fringing was visible even along the extremely high-contrast edges of the windows. The result shown here required virtually no further processing.

The "Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtnis-kirche" (Protestant Kaiser William Memorial Church) is the fourth subject in this series. This was another subject that was familiar to me from occasional previous visits. I still recalled the beautiful glow of the mosaic walls.



The Protestant Kaiser William Memorial Church is located on Berlin's Kurfürstendamm in the Charlottenburg district.



Michael Wartmann, was born in 1962 in Berlin. He spent some time living in Tempelhof, where he took up photography while training as an electrician and successfully taught himself the basics. From 1993 to 1996, he studied logopedics in Aachen. During this period of his life, photography became his passion. His favourite subjects are people, landscapes and architecture. After graduating, he returned to Berlin and embarked on various photography projects in his spare time.



The Charité is a famous hospital in Berlin that is rich in tradition.

The church is not particularly large and the Distagon T* 2,8/21 ZF once again proved to be the perfect choice of ultra-wide-angle lens. Even at this early hour, there were crowds of tourists in the church, and I had to wait quite some time on the gallery before I got a clear view of the altar with the mosaic wall behind.

My final subject, the old auditorium known as the "Kopsch Hörsaal" in the Charité Hospital grounds, was a new experience for me, too, and really quite remarkable. I think that I have only ever seen anything like it in the movies! The space was extremely narrow, but once again the Distagon T* 2,8/21 ZF came to my rescue with its huge angle of view. Thanks to its outstanding attenuation of stray light, the bright lights in the image did not produce any kind of flare or ghosting.

From China to Venezuela via Bulgaria: Meet the Winners of the ZEISS Photo Competition

The theme of this year's Carl Zeiss photo competition was "The Pulse of the City". Under this title, we were searching for interesting photos that successfully captured the spirit or "zeitgeist" of modern cities. The primary focus was on city streets that somehow symbolize the "veins of life". One of the terms of the competition was that participants had to use a Carl Zeiss lens. Photographers from almost 40 countries took part in the competition, and the 10-strong international jury, which included the renowned photographer Uwe Ommers, evaluated more than 1000 individual photos.

In the following article we would like to introduce the winners to you. What motivated them to get into photography? What equipment do they work with? What inspired them to take the winning image?



Already when Colin Jones was young he discovered his passion for photography.



The winning picture of Colin Jones „Your typical old back alley here in Chongqing in China.“

Colin Jones from the USA took first place with his picture of a typical Chinese alleyway. This shot captures the theme of the competition in a decidedly melancholy way. The dingy lighting reinforces this atmosphere and draws the viewer into the streets of Chongqing in China, where Jones currently lives. Jones is a keen rangefinder photographer. He started taking photographs from an early age and embarked on the study of photography to enhance his skills. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/avotius/>

Second place went to **Jake Thomas** from the USA for his picture entitled „Even the Stars Need Help to Shine“. The 19-year-old actor lives in Los Angeles, California. His enthusiasm for photography was kindled from an early age by his grandfather. Although Thomas was too young to understand the technical aspects, he was fascinated by the different perspectives that a viewfinder offers to an observer. Gradually, his hobby became a full-blown passion, and he has gradually developed a particular interest in concert photography. Thomas saw the Carl Zeiss photo competition is an opportunity to measure up his abilities against those of top-class photographers. He was determined to produce a brand-new image that fully reflected the theme of the competition. After various attempts, he finally hit upon this picture, which Thomas considers to

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Jake Thomas stroll the „Hollywood Walk of Fame“ for several days in order to capture his winning image.



Photographer Thomas Birke specialized in his professional career on wedding and urban photography.

be an accurate representation of the real Hollywood, the part that the world never sees.

By preference, Thomas chooses to work with Carl Zeiss lenses. In part due to his career as an actor, he associates ZEISS with top-notch, professional equipment. This is one of the reasons why Thomas is determined to continue using ZEISS products as his number one choice.



His grandfather introduced Jake Thomas to photography and ZEISS.

Third place was taken by **Thomas Birke** from Germany. „To me, this image embodies the pulse of the city“, explains Birke, referring to his competition entry. „The veins of the city are the highways. They loop themselves through the street canyons like snakes.“ Birke has dedicated himself to urban photography, so the competition’s theme of „The Pulse of the City“ was right up his street. He aims to capture the smells, the noise and the hectic atmosphere. What motivates people to crowd together in certain places when there is plenty of free space available all around them? Is city life better? One thing is for sure: it is certainly faster-moving! www.birke.net

Passionate Attention to Details...and to Optics

My "first love" was a second-hand Rollei SL 35 that I acquired in 1982. A camera that I still remember to this day, partly due to its elegant simplicity and partly to its lens: a Carl Zeiss Distagon 2,8/35mm. This was a lens that really got under my skin! I can still feel in my fingertips the precision of the focusing and the way the apertures clicked into place.

So when three more Carl Zeiss lenses fell into my hands last year after numerous different camera systems had come and gone, I was obviously eager to try them out. The three lenses were the Distagon T* 2,8/25mm, the Distagon T* 2/35mm and the Planar T* 1,4/50mm. The right camera for this situation was a Nikon D3. It may not have the elegance of my old Rollei, but it certainly has plenty of its own unique charm. And with the ZEISS lenses it sits in your hand beautifully, significantly better than with other lenses.

Starting with the 35mm lens was the obvious choice. The new f/2.0 aperture was a revelation for me in the truest sense of the word. I love working in existing light, and a great deal of my photo reportage takes place in the evenings and at night. In comparison to my „old“ 35mm lens, which unfortunately only exists in my memory, I was immediately struck by the even greater attention to detail. The haptics and precision are truly unique. The ultrasonic motor and plastic housing fade into the background as you realize just how brilliantly this lens does its job.



This image was taken in the context of the series called „Not far away“ which Max Thinius completed in 2008.

And the photos it produces are just as good as you would expect. It automatically gives you a firmer footing as a photographer. It is somehow easier to get the right perspective, and subjects seem more alive. It is hard to explain, but you basically feel that you have a better grip on the image. Although there is no autofocus, that does not slow you down. Rather than continuously

keeping up, you start to anticipate the subject, shifting the focus exactly where you want it without having to weigh up the results of autofocus first. The result looks good, and, since rediscovering this approach, I find I need far fewer memory cards for a much better selection of images.

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Even people who have nothing to do with photography are immediately struck by the results. My first job with the new lenses was to take some private portraits of a Berlin businessman. When his wife saw the photos, she simply said: „What amazing depth and plasticity!“ She captured the essence of working with all three of these lenses, the fact that you almost feel you are taking photographs with a different camera. The depth of the images is unique. The transition from in-focus to out-of-focus elements is precise, but not too harsh. The bokeh produces an image that is truly alive, and the elements of blur give the subject a beautifully vital look.

All the lenses provide superb results at maximum aperture. The 25mm lens creates unique compositions in



Max Thinius lives in Berlin. He learned about photography in 1986 in Duesseldorf, Germany at the Heinrichs/Pflanz Studios. He subsequently expanded his knowledge working various London magazines. Nowadays he focuses on reportage photography. He also likes doing portraits for private clients.



The images shown here form part of the series „Scenes of a night“ and „Not far away“.

this mode thanks to its very subtle vignetting, which can be compared to a gentle blackberry or barrique note in a top-class red wine. Something would certainly be missing without this vignetting, but anyone who prefers to omit it can simply stop down one f/stop.

Once again, the 35mm has become my lens of choice, though the superb 50mm lens puts up a strong battle for my attentions! I prefer to head out with just one of the lenses on my

camera and to work with subjects using the options I have available. This is the best way to create the freshest and most exciting images in life photography. I also like the 50mm lens as a portrait focal length, since it always manages to reveal something of each person's life story. You really get a flavor of the story behind the picture, and the blur characteristics enable me to provide an excellent setting for this story using the aperture.

Measuring Lenses Objectively – Part 2

In the first part of this article - published in issue 30 of the Camera Lens News - Dr. Hubert Nasse, Senior Scientist of the Carl Zeiss AG, gave an answer to the question "Why do we need MTF curves?"

We have already seen how the shape of the point images as determined by the aberrations and diffraction on the one hand correlates with the modulation transfer on the other. We also encountered the various graphical depictions of the MTF, and I showed you four different basic types of transfer functions in the chapter

on contour sharpness and image contrast.

Basically, we have learned the basics of how to read MTF curves, but all this is a bit theoretical considering that images are what really matters.

In this article, we will therefore be examining MTF curves within the actual image.

To do this, we will look at three different motifs each of which were imaged using twelve different transfer functions. Obviously, these images must be available at sufficiently high

resolution, so instead of including them in this text they are available for you to download from our server.

The PDF includes the MTF curves relating to the images as well as additional explanations.

You can find the complete article online at www.zeiss.com/cln in issue 31 of the Camera Lens Newsletter.



Sample application with twelve different transfer functions.

- Camera Lens News
- A newsletter for anyone who enjoys using, writing about, buying and selling Carl Zeiss camera lenses.

- All information in Camera Lens News is accurate to the best of our knowledge at the time of publication.

- Publisher:
- Carl Zeiss AG
- Camera Lens Division
- Marketing
- 73446 Oberkochen
- Germany
- Phone: +49 (0) 7364/ 20-6175
- Email: photo@zeiss.de
- Internet: www.zeiss.de/photo