

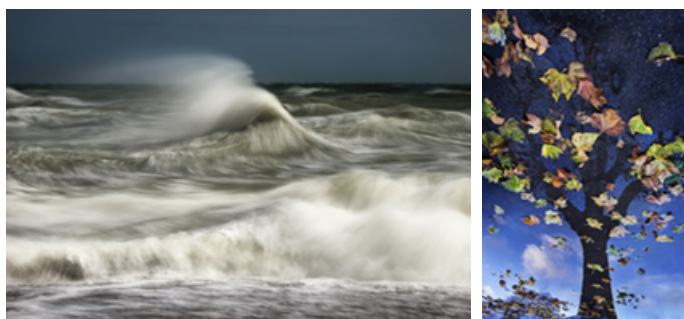
Aligning the eye, heart and head



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SIG: Digital Imaging Thames Valley

Do we take for granted what is on our doorstep? Vanda Ralevska is well placed to warn us against doing so. Her passion for the UK, in particular the wonderful opportunities it offers for coastal photography is infectious, and not just the coast. Telling us to "...dance in the raindrops", Vanda encouraged the DIG Thames Valley audience to embrace all that the UK landscape and climate have to offer.



Her photographs illustrate that the weather provides a wealth of changing light and atmosphere for photography, if you are in the right frame of mind and take time to "stand and stare." Remember to enjoy the moment and "don't just go to take pictures." This is a lesson Vanda learnt first-hand. Having flirted with the idea of turning professional, Vanda discovered that shooting images for an income brought with it demands that eroded away the joy she experienced with her personal work.



Living and working in the City has led Vanda to look for subjects close to home. Her photographs of London streets, Bushy Park, Dorney, and the South Downs exhibit the same unique style seen in her coastal work. Not the first photographer to discover the benefits of getting up early, many of her images benefit from the beauty of the pre-dawn light. Admitting to getting up an hour earlier on weekdays to allow some photographic time before work gave the audience an insight into her commitment to the craft. Some audience members were

heard to gasp at the suggestion of getting up at 5am, reminding me of a quote by Debra Applin, "The morning is such a lovely time of day. It's a shame it's so early."

For many, Vanda's presentation will be remembered for her words as well as pictures, and also the choice of music accompanying her last, very moving sequence of images taken in



Prague, another city that has captured her heart. She has a unique ability to captivate an audience with her very personal, passionate, emotional response to the photographic process. Her work illustrates perfectly what Henri Cartier-Bresson meant when he said "It is an illusion that photos are made with the camera... they are made with the eye, heart and head." A quote that Vanda appropriately included in her presentation.

Thank you Vanda for a great day.

Chris Tank - DIG Thames Valley

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