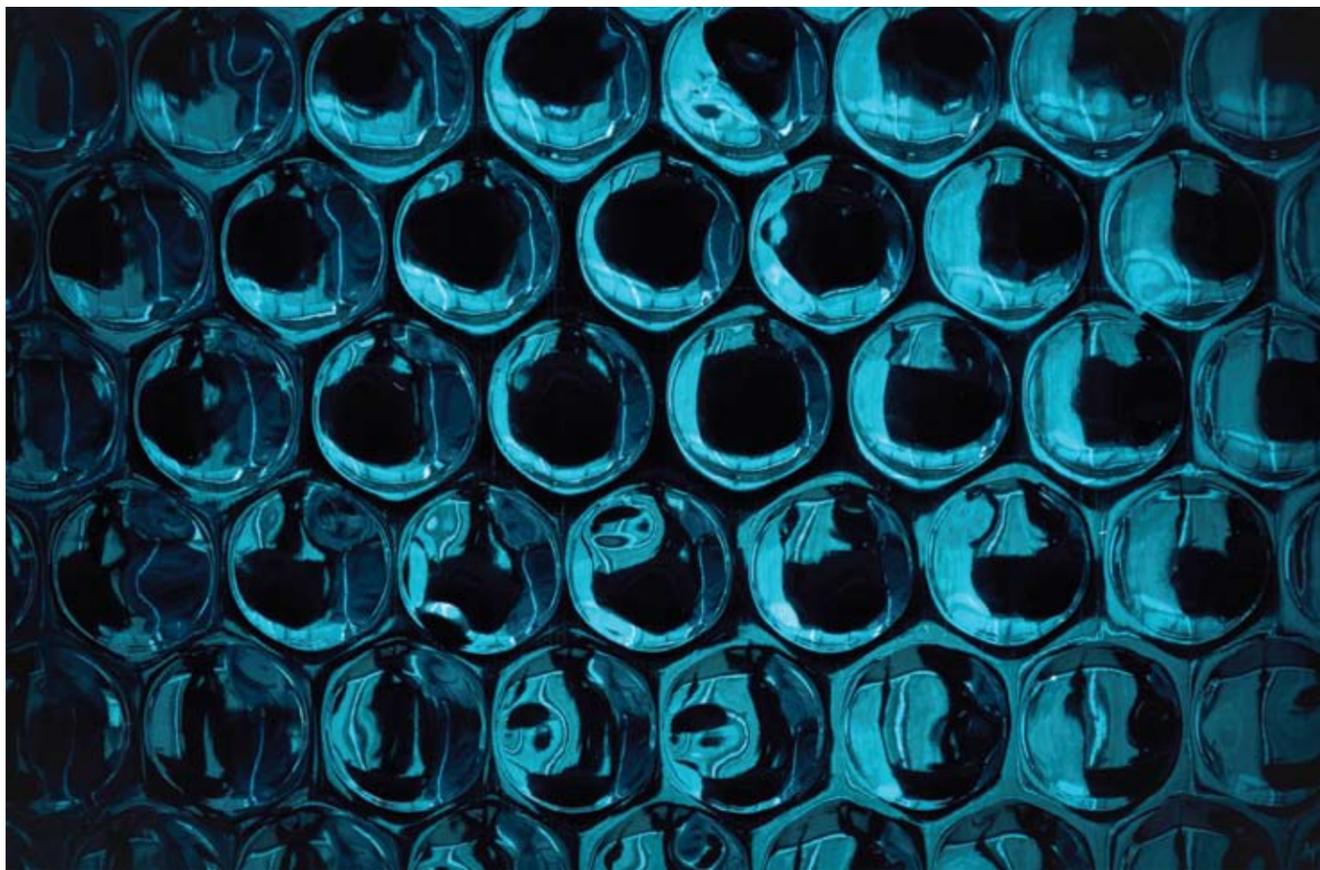


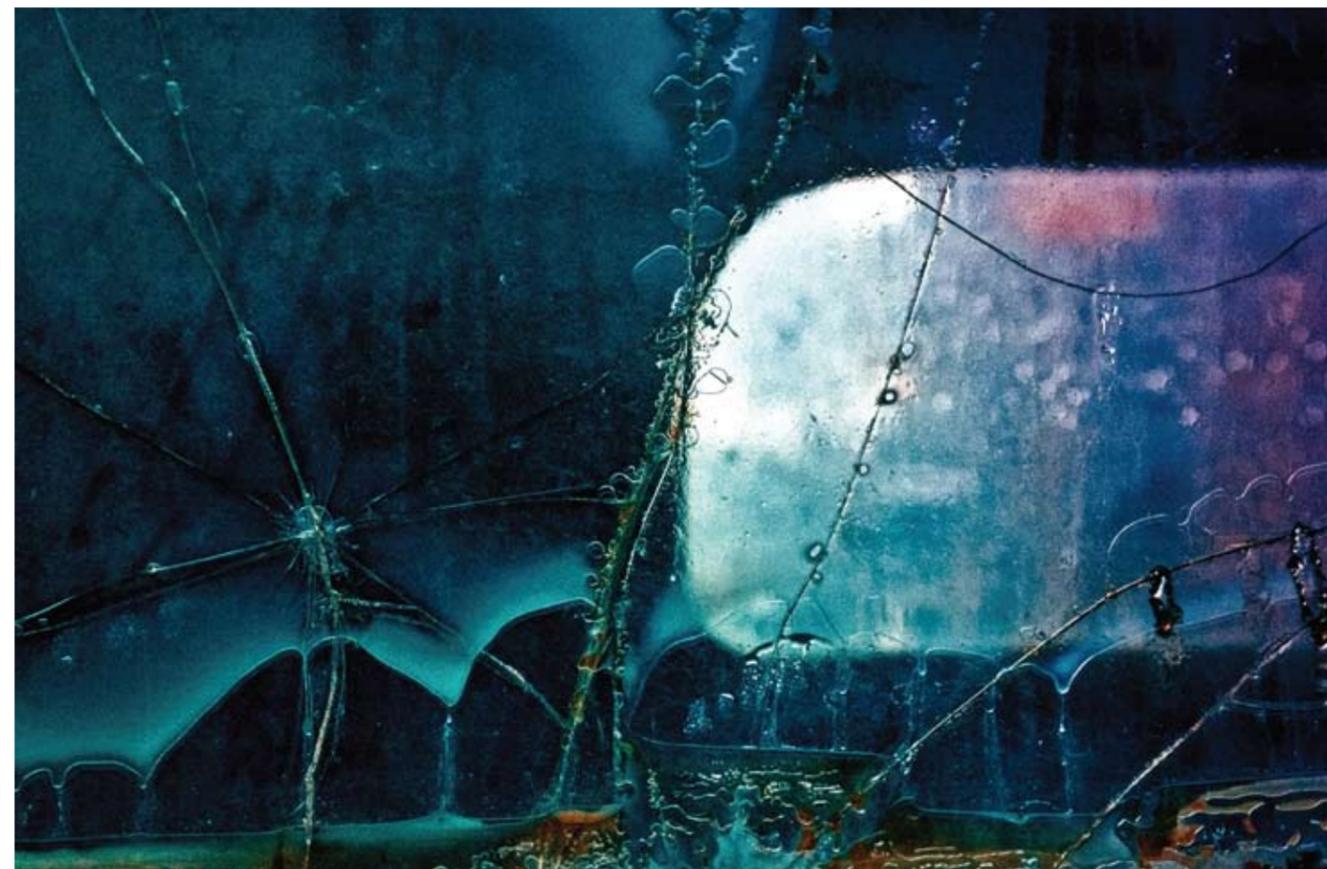
IN-DEPTH GUIDE TO...

# CLOSE, CLOSER, CLOSEST

*Why keep your distance from a subject? Step near, fill the frame with patterns or textures and open your eyes and mind to the possibilities presented by these unconventional images – and you don't even necessarily need a specialist macro lens to get started. A myriad photo opportunities are already lurking right underneath your nose. But are you ready for your close-up?*

TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT JUSTIN GREEN'S URBAN ABSTRACTS







# JUSTIN GREEN

Discovering the beauty in objects that are normally overlooked is one of the aspects of macro that keeps Justin Green taking pictures

WORDS CHARLOTTE GRIFFITHS PICTURES JUSTIN GREEN

Favourite location New York Camera Canon EOS 7D Last subject on memory card The National Monument to the Women of World War II in Whitehall, London

Macro photographers will often say that one of the best aspects of their preferred genre is capturing sights and views that people usually miss or unknowingly pass over. Photographer Justin Green is no exception to this, but he takes his close-up work even further, finding details, symmetry and patterns in the urban decay of busy cities such as New York, London and Toronto. Others uninitiated into this way of seeing would probably walk straight past old dumpsters or peeling wooden walls: Justin photographs these forgotten items and draws out a strange beauty that might otherwise never be seen.

His love of transforming and embellishing environments started at an early age. "As a teenager I was a graffiti artist, so I guess my abstract photography stems from the designs and complexity of that hobby," he said. Having enjoyed painting and drawing throughout his life, Justin discovered photography when he was given a Polaroid camera at the age of nine and promptly started saving up for a Zenith 11 ("all manual, so it was good for learning the basics").

A long and successful career in the print trade beckoned after leaving school, which has taken up a lot of Justin's working time over the years. Now based in the east of England, his love of gardening, travel and photography occupies all of his free time and happily he's been able to combine his three main hobbies wherever possible. But what is it that he enjoys the most about shooting so close up to objects? "With macro, you get to notice the beautiful detail that makes up a flower," he said. "With regard to my urban macro shots, I just love the fine detail that sometimes goes unnoticed, be it rust, paint or textures. I get great satisfaction from what I capture, whether a macro shot of a flower or an urban abstract shot. Being creative is a great release from everyday life."

With his Canon EOS 7D packed into a Lowepro rucksack along with an EOS 50D, Canon 24-105mm, Canon 70-200mm,

**“ With macro, you get to notice the beautiful details that go unnoticed, be it rust, paint or textures. I get great satisfaction from what I capture, whether a macro shot of a flower or an urban abstract. Being creative is a great release from everyday life ”**

Canon 100mm macro, Sigma 50mm and 10-20mm, Canon Speedlite 580 EX II flash and several filters, Justin would love to travel the world more frequently, valuing good ideas for photographs over good equipment, and spending a mythical £5k on a round-the-world air ticket rather than choosing to expand his kit bag. "I'm forever jotting down notes for future projects," he said. "I do try to take a camera with me whenever I go out. Sometimes I don't, but with the latest mobile phones, I can always take a photo for a possible idea and come back to that location at a later date."

Though most of his photographs are his own ideas, Justin also takes some inspiration from photographers such as Joel Meyerowitz. "At the moment I am looking at his book, *Legacy*, which has some great photos of the urban wilderness found in the New York City parks. I would like to explore more of the United States – the more remote the better."

## Urbane details

Although Justin's detailed urban work might suggest that he's a city dweller, he actually lives out in the countryside but finds himself drawn back to the metropolis to take pictures whenever possible. "I was born in Barking and I have previously

worked in London so I do feel like I am drawn to capture urban moments. I feel comfortable within an urban environment – it's a forever changing landscape."

Of all the places he's visited, New York is his favourite location to go wandering with his camera and has been the subject of many of his close-up photographs. He even pours cold water on the popular stereotype that New Yorkers are unfriendly or always in a hurry. "On every corner of the city there is a potential photo opportunity," he says, "and you will also find that the people there stop walking and wait for you to take your shot instead of getting in your way. Even when they accidentally walk into your shot, they apologise afterwards."

Though Justin tries to focus on capturing patterns and working close-up, New York has also been the scene of some interesting photographic sub-projects inspired by exploring the city. "My 'not looking through the viewfinder' project was something I came up with while walking along the Brooklyn Bridge," he explains. "I got some interesting results and some great expressions that wouldn't normally be caught if I was to have obviously stuck a camera in people's faces."

Even when back at home in England in his garden, shooting more natural subjects, Justin tries to keep his images clean and graphic in their style. "I try to keep my nature shots as simple as possible, and always use a tripod and remote release cable as it's important to capture as much detail as possible. I also always shoot in Raw and if it's going to be a monochrome, I'll convert the image to black & white at a later date rather than doing it in-camera – sometimes that can look more dramatic."

Justin has taught himself photography and digital processing, learning from his mistakes where possible, and rarely uses Photoshop, preferring Lightroom for the majority of his processing – "getting rid of unwanted spots or blemishes, changing the exposure and so on. I also regularly print my images out and I'm currently producing limited edition runs of my work."

As well as creating prints of his pictures, Justin has also published a Blurb book of

his images, compiled with pictures taken in Chicago, London, New York, Singapore and Toronto. "My book *Connected* is a collection of my urban and abstract work. I would thoroughly recommend making a book of your photography to anyone. Apart from the Internet and having a website, it's still a great way of letting people see your work. I still believe in seeing photographs printed up in a good quality book or printed and framed and on a wall."

Justin also uses Flickr and other photo sharing websites to promote his work to others. "Flickr is a great way of meeting people from all over the world," he said. "You build up new friendships, you can share ideas and get some great feedback on your work. It is also a great starting place for showing off your latest creations. My own website is hosted by Zenfolio. They have a great customer service team and it's fairly easy to set up. I'm also on Facebook and Twitter, which are both free and good for encouraging other people to have a look at your work."

Entering photography competitions is also something that Justin's started to do with his images, though when entering paid competitions he's always careful to read the small print before entering. "I recently entered several photos into the Format Festival, and one of those was chosen to go on display. I've also submitted eight photos into the London Street Photography Festival, and there are several other competitions that I'm looking into. I've also got to spend some time looking for a gallery to work with in promoting my urban and abstract photography."

So the next time you're walking through somewhere run-down that you'd usually stroll past without a second glance, why not try to do as Justin does with his subjects and find an interesting angle on it? With a creative eye, a lens capable of getting up close and a flair for the unusual, you might be surprised by what photographic possibilities you discover. O



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## THE STORIES BEHIND THE PICTURES



**SOLAR**  
Chicago, Illinois. This is the interior of the bathroom in the hotel. The bathroom light highlighted some glorious textures and colour.

Canon EOS 50D, Canon 60mm macro, ISO 100, f/16, 1/8sec



**DOUBLE BUBBLE**  
This is metallic bubble wrap. I loved the way it caught the light and the abstract reflections.

Canon 50D, ISO 100, 60mm, f/11, 1/60sec



**WIRED**  
This is rolled up fencing from a local allotment. I loved the beautiful greens and light coming through.

Canon EOS 50D, ISO 400, 60mm, f/7.1, 1/80sec



**PEEL ME OFF**  
This was taken along the Essex coast.

Canon EOS 7D, ISO 100, 100mm, f/16, 1/80sec

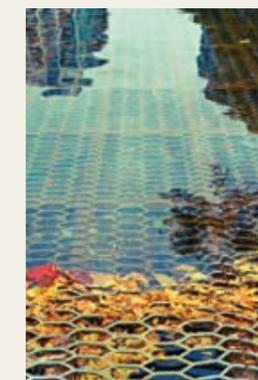
**WINDSCREEN**  
Taken in Toronto, Canada, this is an old Dodge truck that was just rusting away.

Canon EOS 7D, ISO 1600, 24-105mm at 84mm, f/6.3, 1/100sec



**ORBIT**  
This was taken in London. It's the side of an old skip.

Canon EOS 7D, ISO 100, 70-200mm at 111mm, f/16, 1/30sec



**HARBOUR FRONT**  
This was taken in Toronto, Canada. This shot just jumped out at me while walking along.

Canon EOS 7D, ISO 160, 24-105mm at 32mm, f/9, 1/60sec