

2021

VANTAGE

BY THE PICTORIES



ESSENTIALS

A guide to photography
essentials

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Backpacking Essentials

-Abhishek Thapliyal

Many people think photography is easy, all you need is a good quality camera and boom you are a professional. But no!!! A professional needs equipment to master their art of photography. All sorts of gears are equipped to produce the highest quality of photography in any situation. So let's dive in to find what equipments are a must to your photography backpacking list.

1.Camera:

You need a camera to shoot, but why it is the first and foremost thing? Well, you have to check it's properly working or not, clean it well, and make sure you always carry a spare camera with you because they often come in handy when you're out of battery on one.

Some of the best cameras are:

a. Sony A7R III:

Dynamic range and detailed images.

Good autofocus in frame mode.

b. Nikon D850:

Great image quality even at high ISO.

Huge optical viewfinder.

2.Lenses:

Lenses are as important as the camera. A wide variety of lenses can be chosen which depends upon the type of photography you prefer to do. Some of the most preferred categories include prime lenses, wide-angle lenses, and zoom lenses.

Some of the best lenses are:

a. Canon EF 85mm f/1.2L II Lens:

Very high quality and has a very fast maximum aperture that is perfect for low depth-of-field portraiture and still life work. It features a Super Spectra coating to suppress flare and ghosting and is also weather-sealed for safe outdoor shooting.

b.Nikon 85mm f/1.4G Lens:

A high-performance classic portrait lens with an internal focusing mechanism that keeps the lens stable during use and won't change the direction of a polarizing filter or lens hood.

3.Batteries/Powerbanks:

Everyone keeps a backup right? Batteries/Powerbanks are those time saviour backups. No one wants to roam around looking for charging points or batteries and leave the beautiful scenic destinations alone. So a battery backup is a must to have.

Some of the best batteries are:

NiMH batteries and Alkaline batteries are preferred.

4.Tripod:

Stability is very important in photography and that's what a tripod ensures you will have. Be it landscape, portrait, or macro photography tripod provides efficient photography for long exposures, low-light settings, and trails.

Some of the best tripods are:

a. Manfrotto 190XPro4:

Rigid and sturdy, with a rock-solid XPro ball head.

b. Vanguard Veo 3+ 263AB:

Really effective, affordable, and versatile full-size tripod.

5.Remote Shutter Release:

No one likes to have blurry pictures, and when you're stargazing for some beautiful night photography you'll need it. It just triggers your camera shutter without you actually touching the camera and accidentally shaking it and you get an amazing click.

Some of the best Remotes are:

a. Canon BR-E1:

Compact and lightweight, Bluetooth connectivity, Easy to use.

b. Canon RC-6:

A no-frills, super-simple infra-red remote for older Canon cameras.

Memory Cards:

Everyone wants to savor their best memories, remember them forever, and watch them whenever they want to. So, if you don't want to miss out on capturing your memories, always carry a memory card with you because every picture becomes a memory you want to save.

Some of the best memory cards are:

- a. SanDisk Extreme PRO SDXC UHS-I: Great rapid-fire performance, Good for stutter-free video.
- b. Lexar Professional Class 10 UHS-II 2000X: High-speed data transfer, Limited lifetime warranty.

7. Flashlights:

Lighting is necessary creating detail in pictures, especially for night photography. For better illumination and colour depth, flashlights are important. Although it's not a must have, it still makes the picture more outstanding.

Some of the best flashlights are:

- a. Coast HP7: 530 Lumens, this a quality built reliable light with smooth flood to spot function.
- b. Nitecore SRT7: A full function light with dimmable 0.5 to 1000 Lumens and Strobe. UV, Red, Green and Blue LEDs.

8. A Cleaning Kit:

This is something that is a must. Your camera and all of its equipment need to be cleaned for better performance and to avoid problems. A microfibre cloth and a puffer ball come in handy when you have to blow off the dust on your lenses.

Some of the best cleaning kits are:

- a. Zeiss Lens Cleaning Wipes: Super-convenient gives a spotlessly clean, cost-effective when purchased in bulk.
- b. LensPen NLP-1: Gives great results with both dry and oily contaminants, convenient kit bag size, low price.

9. Camera Straps:

Camera straps are needed to provide additional stability and firmness while photographing. By preventing camera shaking and with a bit of good posture, you will have wonderful clicks

Some of the best Camera Straps are:

- a. Peak Design Slide: Holds 200lbs (90kgs)! Quick Release Mounts, smooth & comfy, fast adjustment.
- b. Peak Design Capture Clip V3: Incredibly versatile, weatherproof, lightweight, instant access.

10. Camera Bag:

Last but not least, all the gear should be placed in a camera bag. The reason we don't prefer to use a normal bag is because of the additional safety camera bags provide for your gear. Quick access and comfortable placement are a must that you can get with a camera bag.

Some of the best camera bags are:

- a. Peak Design Everyday Messenger 13 V2: Impressive capacity, easy to organize.
- b. Lowepro ProTactic BP 350 AW II backpack: Modular design, loads of accessories, accepts a drone.

When it comes to photography, money will always be involved, and like it is said the more the merrier, having some equipment won't be a setback. You will have to spend a bit but not a fortune; and honestly, most of us will pay for a beautiful picture.

So finally, you're all set to go for a wonderful photography adventure.

Underwater Photography

-Yashita Vaid

There are as many photography opportunities down beneath the ocean as there are up in the vast skies. But in order to realize those opportunities, you need more than a keen eye. Both timing and technique play a very important role; however, along with these essential factors, the camera equipment also matters a lot. In this article, we try to provide a beginning for those who would like to know more about underwater photography.

What is Underwater Photography?

Underwater photography is the process of taking photographs while under water. It is usually done while scuba diving, but can be done while diving on surface supply, snorkeling, or swimming. Underwater images may range from scenic shots of the unexplored unadulterated ocean depths and its wildlife to artistic photographs with underwater models. There are many underwater photography jobs available in scientific and marine industries. Additionally, there is a lot of room for passionate scuba divers who would like to share a glimpse of their underwater world with us land dwellers.

The Muse

Wildlife: There is no secret that some of the most beautiful creations of nature live beneath sea level. The range of flora and fauna living underwater is the common and obvious subject for any underwater photograph.

Wide-Angled Shots: Besides capturing any species, in particular, a photograph may also depict the general beauty of underwater scenes such as a school of fish, coral reefs, etc.

Up-close: The beauty which can be felt at a distance can also be magnified and looked upon from an infinitesimal distance.

Thus, macro photography underwater is also a very common approach amongst scuba divers.

Fashion: Underwater fashion photography is also a great pick nowadays. Underwater fashion photography is all about telling an artistic story through the photograph. The model may or may not be wearing scuba gear, which makes both underwater photography and modelling a challenge.

Tips and Techniques

Underwater photography can be done while snorkeling, swimming, etc., but it is always more advisable to do it while scuba diving as scuba divers are the ones with better control of their buoyancy and other key factors associated with underwater diving. Techniques such as composition and lighting play a key role in underwater photography.

In these great depths, all the colors except blue are absorbed. Thus, it is difficult to bring out the colors in your pictures as imagined and it becomes extra important to choose compatible professional camera equipment.

While diving underwater, it's impossible to look through your mask, the housing, and the viewfinder. Mirrorless cameras come in handy, especially the ones having big bright back displays. With DSLR, make sure that its live view mode functions quickly and accurately.

Before starting off, one must do sound research about the place, where one can setup, where one can sit, rest, etc. Minimizing impact in the form of waste or any other kind of harm to nature should be the goal.

Lastly, diving techniques such as controlling buoyancy, etc. do not come easy, and an underwater photographer ought to master these in order to click those effortless pictures. Therefore, practice is what matters the most. Practice more, get comfortable with your equipment, and enjoy your exploration beneath the sea.

THROUGH THE LENS OF SCOTT PORTELLI



*Scott Portelli is an international award-winning wildlife photographer, who has bagged a number of significant awards as **Sony World Photography Awards 2016**, **Australian Geographic ANZANG - Behaviour Category 2017**, **DPG/Wetpixel Masters Underwater Imaging Competition 2020**, and **much more**. Let's explore different horizons of underwater photography with Scott*

1. How did you get oriented towards photography? What challenges did you face in the initial phase?

I was always interested in photography in my early 20's but it wasn't until I started to travel that I grew a passion for photography and sharing the amazing places I was visiting. Being a wildlife and underwater photographer meant I was in a niche profession, and there were so many talented photographers around the world that had been working in this field for many years. It took some time to build a portfolio of work and when I started to showcase my work it was challenging to get the right attention. But persistence and building relationships are how you succeed.

2. How difficult do you think underwater photography is? What are the important factors in this scenario?

Underwater photography takes another degree of difficulty as you have to think about so many things including lighting, how colour is affected at depth, visibility, your own capabilities in the water and how to approach marine life in a non invasive way. It is a difficult genre but one that has so many opportunities and so much different subject matter.

3. Do you think you have made a bond with the animals you click now? Like you already know when to capture them perfectly? Or you know when it's the right time to do so?

I try to understand the behaviour of the animals before I decide to photograph them. The more you know their behaviour and patterns, the better the opportunities are. With some animals like whales and dolphins, there is a level of intelligence that you can have a mutual understanding. But my research could take years before I can have a bond with the animal.







4. How did the quarantine period affect you and what different things did you do apart from your normal schedule?

The quarantine has affected so many people, and when I was in lockdown for 6 weeks, I was lucky enough to be near one of the best dive locations in South Australia. So, when we were allowed to go outside again, I made an effort to dive and photograph locally. I think Covid-19 has forced many people to look at the wonders of their own backyard. I know I have always had a passion for exploring my own country, this just gave me more opportunity to get to know it better.



5. How do you pack for such trips? What important items do you carry?

I shoot with so many different rigs, it all depends on what I am doing and where I am going. Because these days you need to shoot video, photos, aerial, etc., it is important to be able to be comfortable working with lots of different equipment. On many shoots, I have 2 x bodies, 2 x underwater housing and strobes, video lights and a number of accessories for sound recording as well. So, I carry a camera back with all my topside gear and another cinebags bag for all my underwater gear.

6. The ocean is a beautiful as well as a dangerous/vulnerable workplace, how do you pull it off/manage it?

You need to be comfortable in the water and be able to deal with any situation that happens. You can't control weather or what the subjects might do in the water. Some animals are predictable, others can change behaviour without notice. Currents and the ocean can also create havoc on a shoot. There are so many factors that affect what we do underwater, and when you add photography in the mix, it becomes even more challenging. I love the ocean and I love floating in the deep blue, motionless and silent, it just makes you feel connected with the ocean. I take a very relaxed but planned approach to any underwater photoshoot.



7. How do you manage physical challenges underwater with such heavy gears?

Gear is cumbersome underwater but it is not heavy, as most camera equipment is designed to be neutrally buoyant. understanding how your equipment performs in the water is key to managing other physical challenges, like strong currents, crashing waves, low visibility, unpredictable animals, etc.

8. For a photographer, it's necessary to have a different eye/perspective towards the world. What is your secret behind it?

I am always looking for a new concept, a new idea that hasn't been seen before. It's easy to copy or improve on other people's work, but it is hard to find something that inspires people because they have never seen it before. I am a behavioural photographer, so I research and study animals to help me capture their unique behaviour. The more time you spend understanding your subject the better the results.

9. For a photographer with 15 years of experience, how do you think photography has changed or evolved with time? I think the business of photography has changed the most and how people perceive photography and its value. Technology has made photography more accessible and there are genres that have emerged that were never there before, due to social media. I think there are still many photographers that have a unique style and their work is synonymous with them. For commercial photographers, the industry has become more challenging but there are always people that stand out above the rest. I do believe you need to adapt to survive an ever changing industry. You find these days that people don't just specialise in one area of photography and have become more eclectic with their offerings.



10. Do you have any regrets in your career? Something you aspire to do in future?

No regrets as the journey is what has got me to where I am. I always aspire to do more, do better, be open to change, and take the time to learn new things. I am never going to stop trying to learn more and strive for perfection.

11. With so many awards in your bag, which one was the most memorable? What was so special about it?

I think the BBC Wildlife Photographer of the Year was one of the most special, privileged moments in my career and the fact that the photograph was from my own backyard was even more special. To be in the company of the top 100 photographers in the world was a life changing moment. 50,000 entries are submitted each year and to narrow it down to 100 images and be a part of that was I highlight of my career.



12. How do your expeditions, like Antarctica, Lord Howe Islands, and Tonga Underwater Caves, affect your photography?

I run a number of different expeditions to remote places in the world to take photographers and filmmakers to these places to capture some of the most amazing wildlife on the planet. I know many of these areas well because I have been visiting for more than 20 years in some places. What this means is I can facilitate the best opportunities for other photographers, and this is the key to my business. However, it does mean that I may not shoot for myself as much as I used to but I can also see when a moment is going to be amazing and take the opportunity to shoot. These days, I try to schedule personal projects for myself to be able to be creative and shoot in new and interesting places.

13. Being a member of the Australian Institute of Professional Photography (AIPP) and also Accredited Professional Video Producer (APVP), how much do you think these accolades are important for a photographer?

I think it is important to be a contributor in a professional industry and the AIPP allows me to do this as well as support photography in Australia. Being affiliated with the organization has helped me meet colleagues, develop relationships with mentors, learn different genres and understand so much more about the business of being a photographer.

14. Any piece of advice for the young ones wanting to pursue photography or to the wider audience?

Be persistent and learn as much as you can from as many people as you can. Build your own style by experimenting with photography. The more you put yourself out there, the more opportunities will be presented.

THROUGH THE LENS OF ENRIC GENER

Enric Gener is an impassioned photographer whose work revolves around underwater landscapes and wildlife. He describes it as an "iconography of his relationship with the sea". His passion has led him to be RedBull Illume 2016 and 2019 Finalist. Let's try to dive into his world of adventure and photography.

1. How did you become intrigued by doing underwater/sea photography? What challenges did you face when you started? I was born on a small island and I always have been in a close relationship with the underwater world. Many years later, after my art studies, I got the idea to explain my sea vision. And some years later, I could afford a camera and started to create my way to show the underwater world.

For me, the big challenge was learning it all by myself without any references to underwater photography with natural lighting.



2. How difficult do you think underwater/sea photography is and what must one do to achieve success in this field?

I think the learning process is much slower than land photography. First of all, the locations are more complex to find. And once you are underwater, everything is blurred, wet, moving, deeper, darker, and remember, you can't breathe.

As in all the fields, it takes lots of practice. Try to live close to the sea, and make underwater photography part of your routine.

3. Being such an experienced photographer now, how do you think photography has changed since you started and how has your photography changed over time?

The big change has been social media and the way to show your work and learn from others. Now we have access to many references. On the other hand, it makes a creative loop. That's why I try to not follow the work of too many photographers. It is more interesting to be inspired from far away, from art fields or old photographers.



4. How did the quarantine period affect your photography and how did you do things differently from your normal schedule?

When Europe started the lockdown, I was in the Red Sea. I decided to not go home and stayed in Dahab, a small town by the sea with a strong freediving culture. For me, it was a privilege to be in that place at that time. Suddenly I was sharing a beautiful sea and desert, with great free divers, instructors without students to attend. I joined them to share training and have an experience for a lifetime.

5. What device do you use for shooting and what gear do you usually carry when you travel?

I'm always using the same gear, traveling or working at home. A Canon 5D, with a 16-35mm lens. Covered with Seacam housing. And I don't use artificial light. For myself, mask, snorkel, and fins. Most of my work is freediving.

6. Are there any new types of equipment or photo editing gadgets you love to use or prefer?

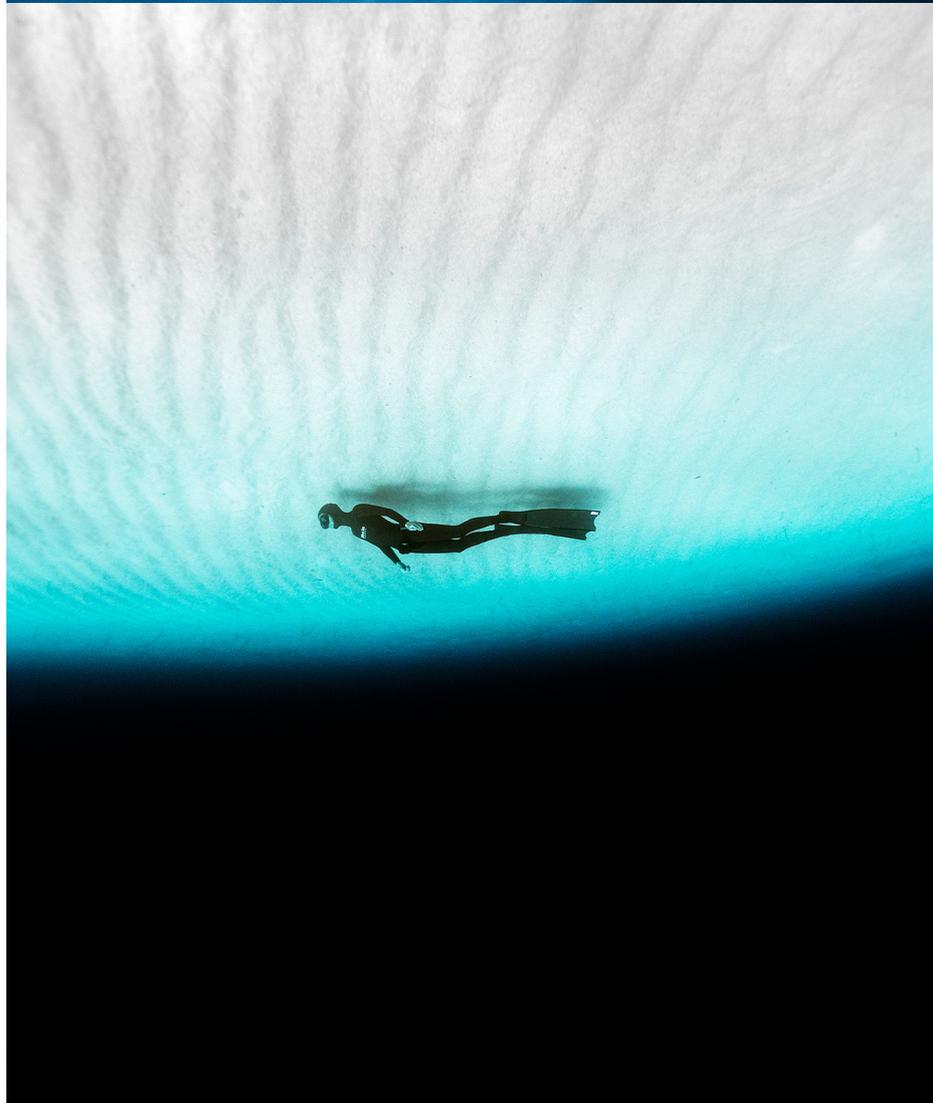
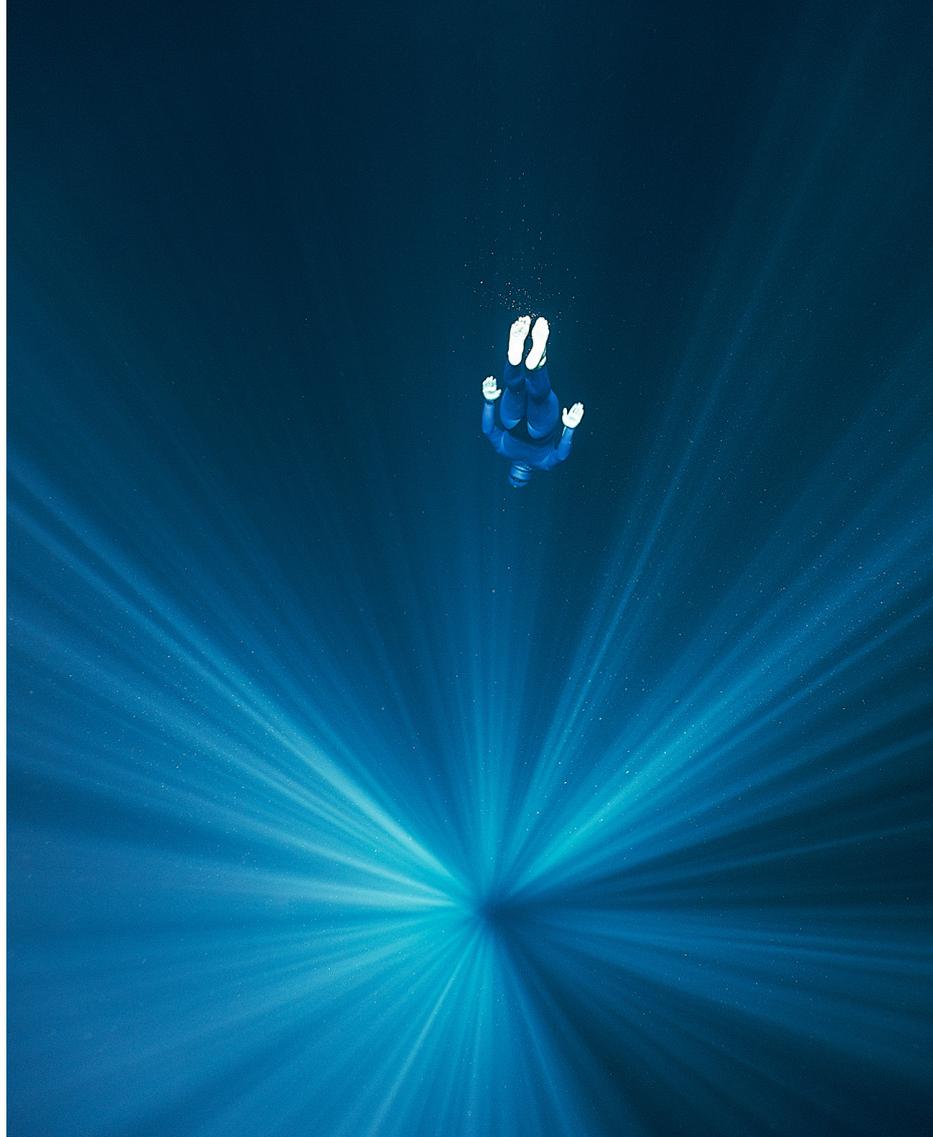
Technically speaking, I'm very ignorant. I just try to have good gear and then spend as much time underwater as possible. I learn more in the practice process than studying.

7. The ocean is a beautiful as well as a dangerous/vulnerable workplace, how do you pull it off/manage it?

I don't feel it is a dangerous place at all. Checking the forecast, having some meteorological knowledge, and asking locals, are basic and easy things that you always must do. Most of the time the sea is a peaceful place.

8. How do you manage physical challenges underwater with such heavy gear?

For my photography style, I don't need to use heavy gear. It is more the opposite. It is like this because I've prioritized myself being agile. Agile in transportation and agile underwater. My camera in saltwater has positive buoyancy and negative in freshwater.





9. Working within such extreme conditions, how do you think one should be prepared to work and capture the perfect shots?

It is equally as important to be confident underwater as it is to be a good photographer. Sometimes the sea is easy like a pool but as conditions become more difficult, the better will be the pictures and more prepared you have to be. You can find very different difficulties: currents, cold, deep, darkness, waves, caves... You can't pretend to be a good ice photographer if you have never been diving in ice. First, you have to understand the medium.



10. Do you think you have bonded with the animals you photograph now? Like you already know when to capture them perfectly, or you know when it's the right time to do so?

As more time you spend with animals more you'll understand them. It is about understanding their psychology and body language. For me, it is easier to understand a shark than a cat.

But the number one rule is to keep calm and take your time. Give time to the animals to be confident with you so that they don't see you as a threat.

11. Do you have any regrets in your photography career? Something you should or shouldn't have done?

Not really, or maybe buy a flash that I never used. But how to know it without trying first.

12. Do you have any advice for young budding photographers regarding underwater photography?

Better practice ten minutes every day than ten hours once a month.

And don't copy. It's going to be tougher and longer but more joyful and interesting.





AMONG THE BEST



Photography contest winners



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Gokul krishna

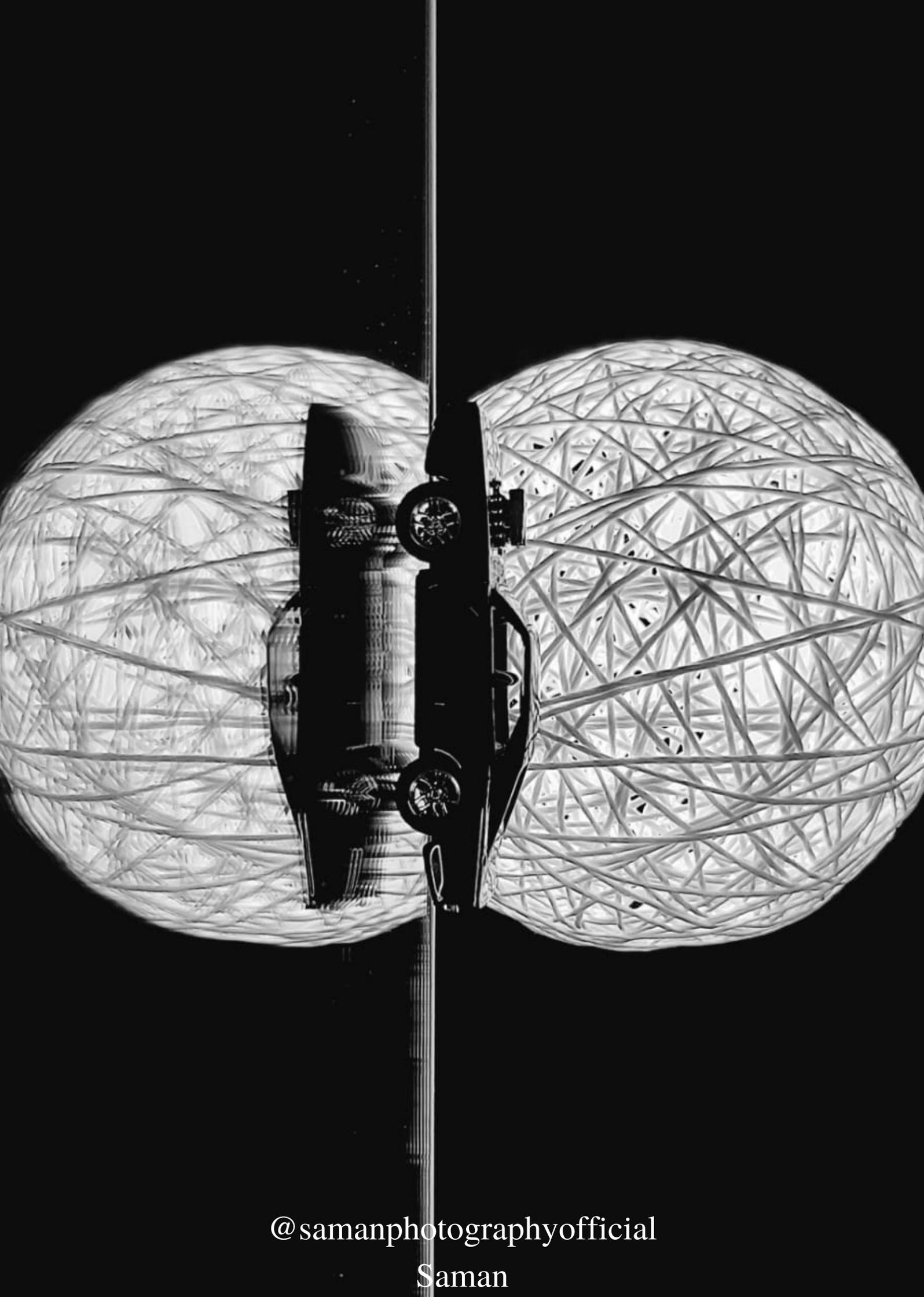


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