

photokina

2014

photokina
world of imaging

INSPIRATION

Digital Camera Reviews
but more important,
Lighting & Lenses
Tripods & Tripod Heads



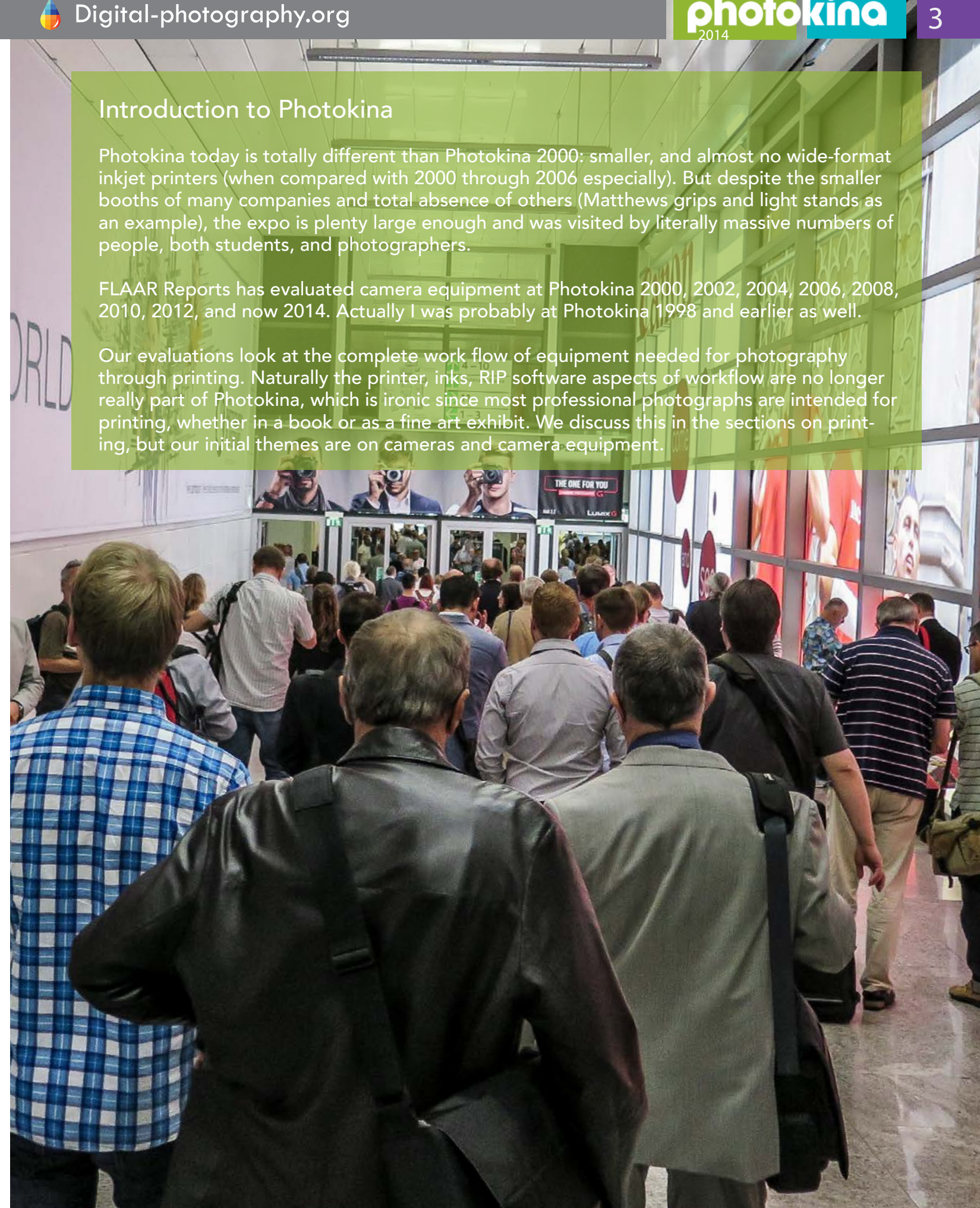


Introduction to Photokina

Photokina today is totally different than Photokina 2000: smaller, and almost no wide-format inkjet printers (when compared with 2000 through 2006 especially). But despite the smaller booths of many companies and total absence of others (Matthews grips and light stands as an example), the expo is plenty large enough and was visited by literally massive numbers of people, both students, and photographers.

FLAAR Reports has evaluated camera equipment at Photokina 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, and now 2014. Actually I was probably at Photokina 1998 and earlier as well.

Our evaluations look at the complete work flow of equipment needed for photography through printing. Naturally the printer, inks, RIP software aspects of workflow are no longer really part of Photokina, which is ironic since most professional photographs are intended for printing, whether in a book or as a fine art exhibit. We discuss this in the sections on printing, but our initial themes are on cameras and camera equipment.



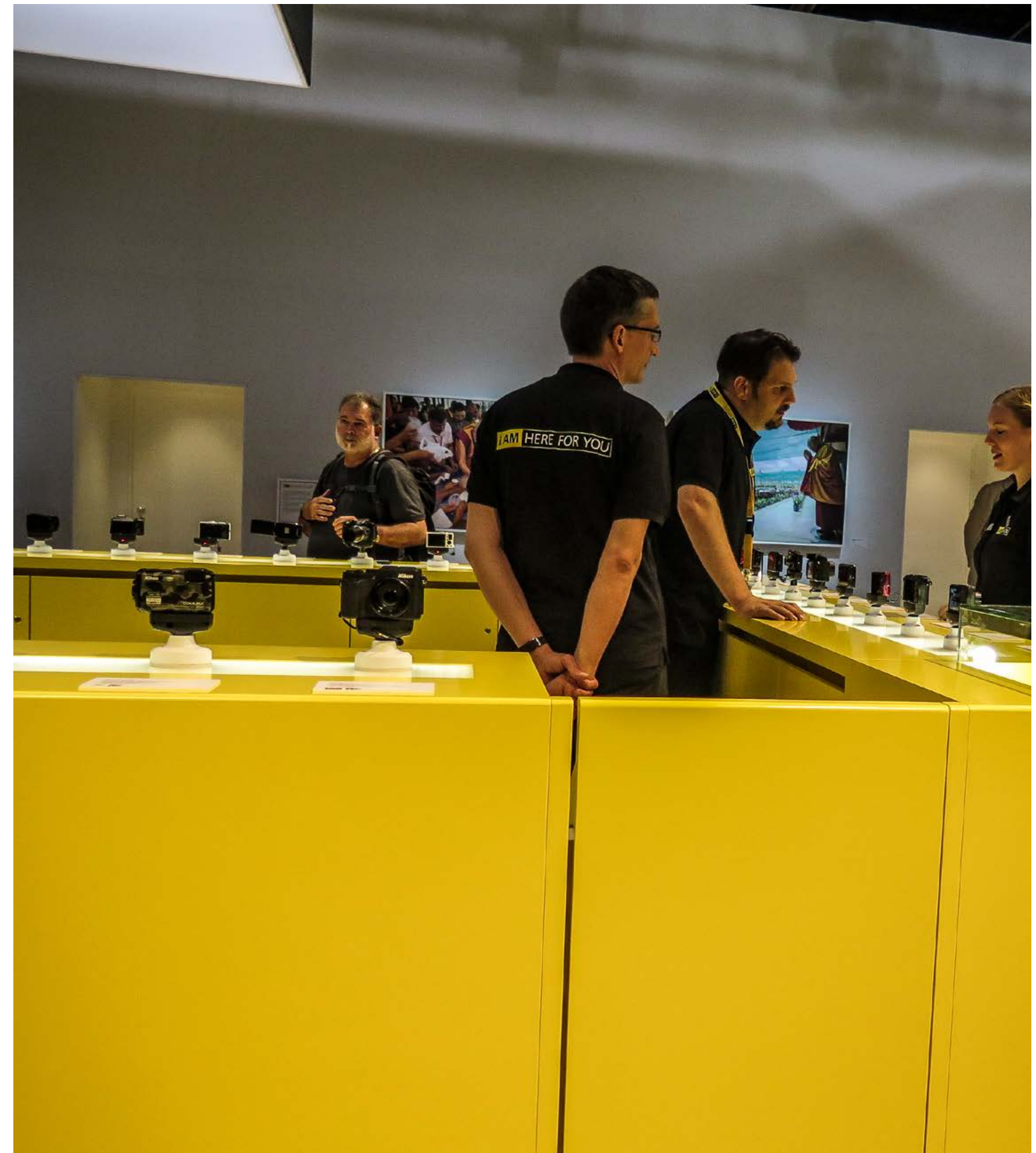
My primary interest as a photographer is medium format and large format digital photography. But compact cameras also serve a useful purpose, obviously for families, but even are helpful for a professional. We use point-and-shoot Nikon and Canon cameras (Canon G16, Canon G1X for example) because often we need to take quick basic photos: no tripod, no fancy accessories. But we tend to concentrate more on serious cameras, because I prefer to have a good prime lens.

Photokina is paradise for people looking for compact cameras. You can find brands from around the world, EU, America, Korea, Hong Kong, China and Japan. They come in every color. Even Leica and Hasselblad have dabbled in the world of point-and-shoot cameras, but I estimate that a really good Nikon or Canon compact camera would be just fine. I do not need pseudo-status from waving a Leica or Hasselblad logo, especially not on a camera made by a cheaper brand but merely with a red logo on it. If I were to use a Leica, I would prefer a real Leica with actual Leitz lenses, Made in Germany.



Canon, Hall 3.2

Nikon, Hall 2.2



Eight years ago Sinar was king of the high end at Photokina. Who is king now? Phase One or Hasselblad? Who else is a competitor? Eight years ago Leaf was awesome. Ten years ago even Heidelberg had a medium format digital back. We have tested Kodak's medium format digital back many years ago. Lots have changed, but medium format is still more sophisticated than DSLR size. And both Sinar and Leaf are back with high-end products.

Canon, Nikon, and Sony (which benefited from taking over the remains of Minolta) are the only DSLR camera brands that I look at. And the Sony primarily as something I would enjoy evaluating.

Sorry, but no company which stresses Four-thirds sensors is of interest; so Olympus is automatically eliminated by making too much emphasis on Four-third's mini-sensors: how can you do a good wide-format architectural photo, or a nice panorama of a beautiful landscape? Another example of hype was the triple-layer sensor of Sigma: all promise, all PR claims, and not much action. Plus they still exaggerate their sensor capability. Many people would consider it is cheating to multiple one layer by 3.



Nikon, Hall 2.2: Nikon D810 shows that your D800E will last only about 2 years before a newer model improves on it.

So I save a lot of time by looking at only Canon, Nikon, and Sony. My first camera was a Leica (at age 16). By age 20 I had a brand new Leica while a student at Harvard. Now three elderly Leica cameras gather dust in my closet: I have not used them in over 15 years. Digital photography is mostly firmware (the software inside the camera), so merely having a Leica lens is not good enough. But I hope to see more advances into digital high-end by Leica by Photokina 2016.



Canon, Hall 3.2: still no camera at their actual high end.

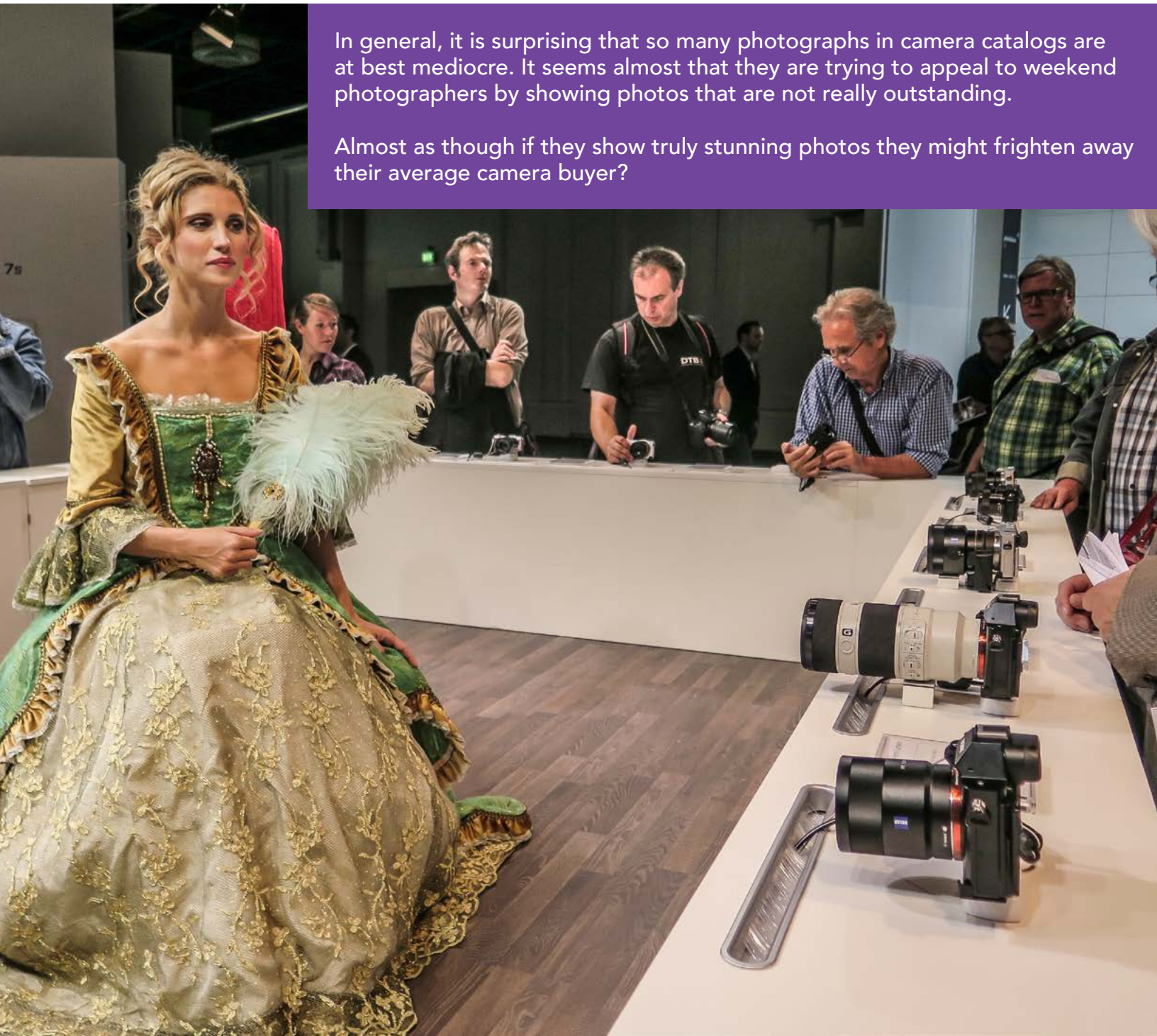
Sony, Hall 5.2.

Sony works hard to move forward from its absorption of the former Minolta. The catalog for the full frame alpha7R is well presented. Unfortunately Nikon and Canon have such a head start, and so many pros and prosumers are content with either Nikon or Canon, that it is tough for Sony to make headway, especially since their competition have so many more lenses (even if the Nikkor made in Thailand are low-bid and don't hold up; other Nikon lenses are acceptable).

The catalog for the alpha7 and a7R use many of the identical photographs, which is rather uninspiring. One tends to wonder how the same photo was taken with two different cameras? And why was the promotion budget so low that the two catalogs had to share too much?

In general, it is surprising that so many photographs in camera catalogs are at best mediocre. It seems almost that they are trying to appeal to weekend photographers by showing photos that are not really outstanding.

Almost as though if they show truly stunning photos they might frighten away their average camera buyer?



Sigma, Hall 4.2, had no brochure for their cameras. Almost the entire exhibit also seemed focused on their lenses, not on any camera. The web site claims the camera sensor is 46 megapixels by kind of cheating, since the sensor is really just 18 megapixels but there are three sensors, one for each RGB color (Red, Green, Blue).

One of our excellent student photographers bought a Sigma telephoto lens (because it was cheaper than an equivalent Nikkor lens). He said that the auto focus was too slow. I would prefer a Canon-brand telephoto lens.



Large-format digital camera systems: other than scanning for giclee, how can these cameras compete with medium format and good "35mm" high-res DSLR cameras?

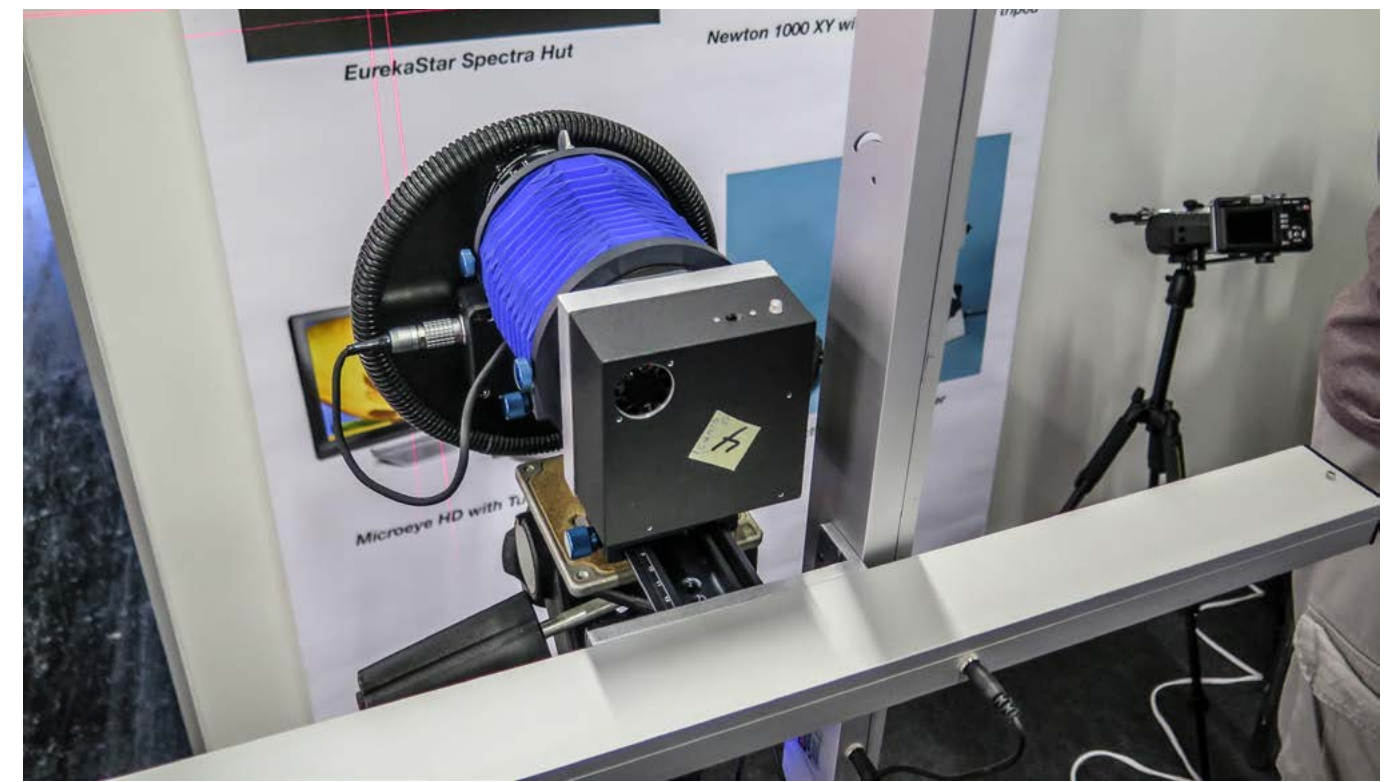


RENCAY, Germany, Hall 2.1, B 41, C 40.





Large-format camera bodies for holding medium format or even for holding DSLR cameras, such as Sinar, Cambo, Alpa, etc.





Sinar (Hall 1) was bought by Leica towards the end of 2013 so Sinar was in the Leica booth.



PhaseOne, Denmark, Hall 2.1, C 39, d 34.

Hasselblad Hall 3.1



We are interested in telescopes which can also be used as telephoto lenses for bird photography. Plus, since the ancient Maya were expert astronomers (without having any telescope whatsoever), we would like to use a telescope to do photography of the main features of the night sky which the Classic Maya used, especially "the rabbit on the Moon," Venus, Mars, and the various constellations.

There are many brands of telescopes, but the two we know the best are listed here.



SWAROVSKI OPTIK, Austria, Hall 2.1, A 19

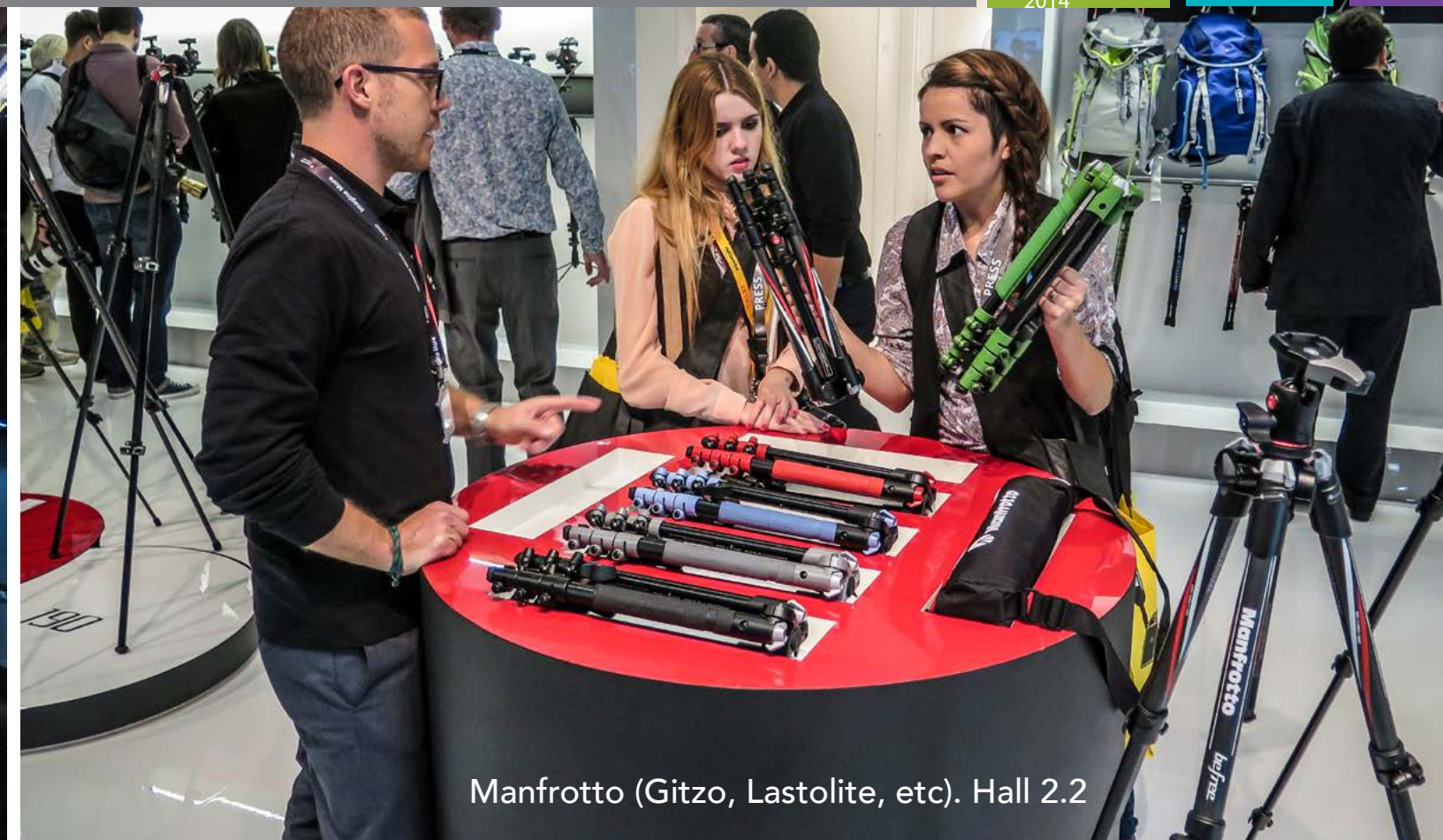
VISIBLE DUST SENSOR CLEANING

A - 39

Country Partners
Wanted



Visible Dust, Canada, Hall 3.1, A 39.

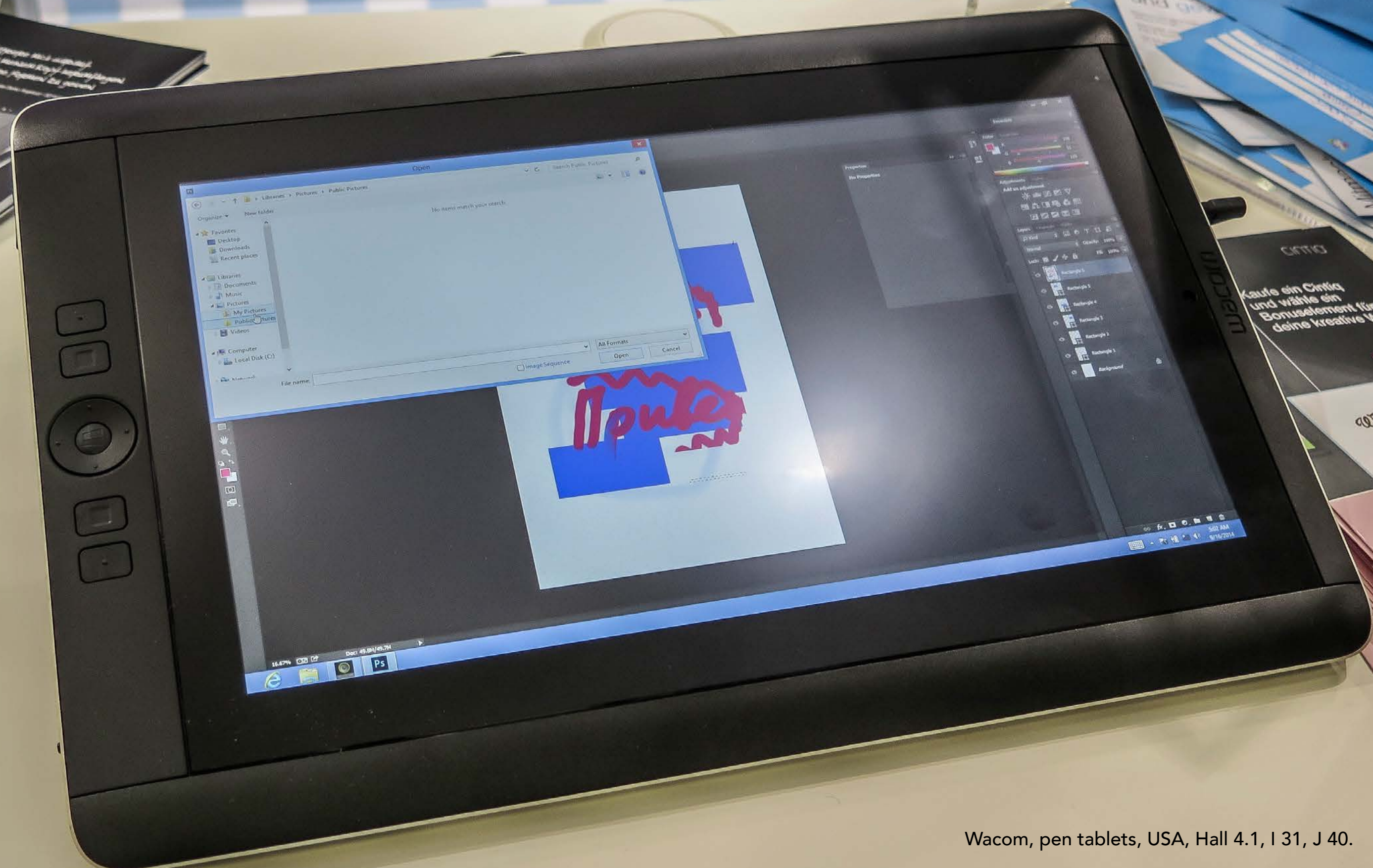


Manfrotto (Gitzo, Lastolite, etc). Hall 2.2





Berlebach Stativtechnik, Germany, Hall 2.1, B 18.



Wacom, pen tablets, USA, Hall 4.1, I 31, J 40.



Savage Universal Corporation, Hall 4.1, G24.



Metz, Germany, Hall 4.2, A 40.



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Western Digital (WD), USA, Hall 4.2, C 12, D 13.



Hoodman, USA, Hall 5.2, D 26.



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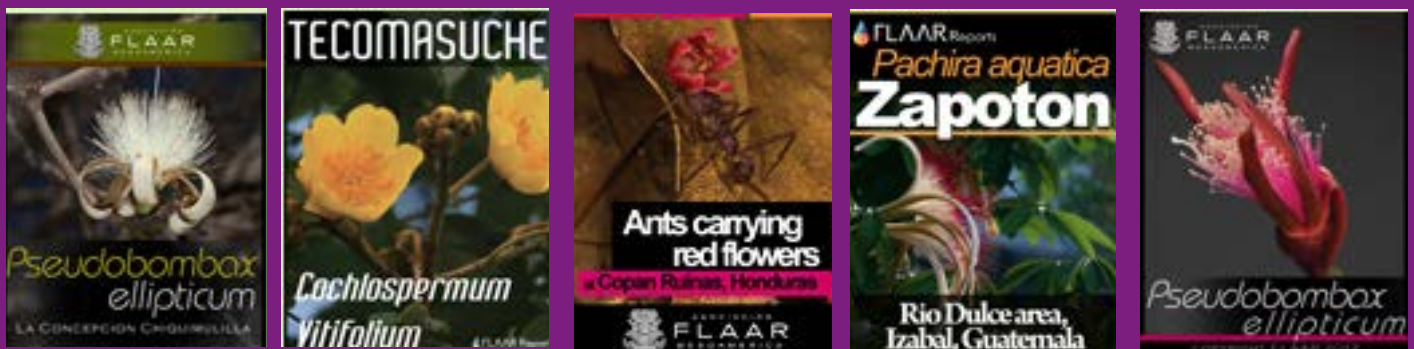
Stop Guessing

Capture to View to video

X-rite, Hall 4.1 J 29



Here are the front covers of FLAAR Reports on photography of plants and animals.



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