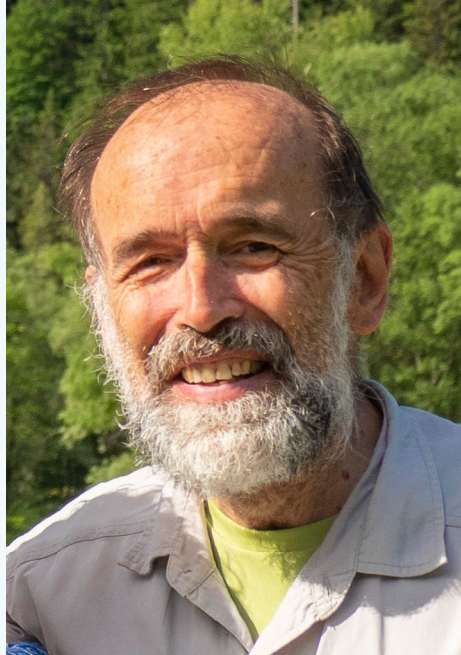


Alain Jouffray



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Born in 1952, I am a professional engineer. I worked in the French administration, particularly as responsible for the protection of nature, and then as responsible for sustainable development in a higher school of agricultural engineers. I am now retired.

In 1973, I almost simultaneously discovered photography (through the photo lab) and ornithology. Since then, I have been a member of ornithological associations in Paris, Dijon, and Montpellier.

I am an amateur nature photographer.

Publications

- My photos have been published regularly via the COLIBRI agency in magazines, books, and various ornithological publications.
- I am co-author photographer, with Guilhem Lesaffre (text) and Fernand Deroussen (recordings), of the book "Maîtres Chanteurs" published by EPA Hachette, 2005.



~ Flight of the European Bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*) ~

Exhibitions

- PHOX GPG gallery, April 1974
- Maison de l'Environnement de Montpellier (When the birds make the colors sing), January 2002
- Autrans Tourist Office (38880) (mountain flowers)
- Vulliod Saint-Germain Museum in Pézenas, September to December 2002
- For 6 years (since my retirement), I have exhibited annually with my photo club in Montarnaud, Juvignac (regional photography meetings), and Montpellier

Competition

- First prize in a Carrefour competition, 1987
- Third prize in the international photo competition of the Bird and Wildlife Film Festival of the Bay of Somme in Picardy, 1993
- One of my photos was exhibited at the Namur festival, 2007

A New Approach: Using ICM to Capture Flying Birds

I have a long history with wildlife photography, birds in particular, and especially passerines (stills and take-offs). Wildlife photography has evolved significantly in recent years, particularly on the Internet, but, in my opinion, it still remains essentially naturalist (the interest of the photo being focused on the behavior of the bird). Personally, I wanted to explore something else.

Interest for the "artistic" (rather than "realistic") aspect of photography

Perhaps because my mother was an art history teacher and painter, I am more interested in the artistic dimension of photography. That's precisely the reason why I joined a photo club, and that's where I learned how to distinguish a beautiful photo (composition, etc.) from a photo of a very beautiful animal (beautiful by itself). As much as possible, I try to do art photography.

However, an artistic wildlife photo is always realistic. That's why I wanted to go further, as painters can do, but with the tools of the photographer.

Discovery of ICM

During an exhibition at the Montier-en-Der Wildlife and Nature Photography Festival in 2017, I discovered the ICM technique applied to landscapes. This technique consists of photographing a subject with long exposure time and intentionally moving the camera while taking the picture. So far, this technique seems to have been mainly used for landscapes and monuments.

Exploration of new areas

Being an ornithologist, and taking pictures of birds for almost 50 years, I wanted to test ICM on birds that have landed, or especially on birds that are in flight. The principle resembles the technique with photographing flying birds at 1/60 second to 1/30 second, but the exposure time is much longer. As far as I know, few wildlife photographers have explored this technique. Personally, I've also tried it on butterflies and plants.



~ European Roller's Climbing (*Coracias garrulus*) ~

My process

I use three kinds of ICM:

- The classical technique: I move my camera during long exposure on fixed subjects, such as birds, animals, plants, buildings, or landscapes. Of course, in all cases, saturation and exposure require some small corrections, but most of the time, it is especially important to refocus on the part of the subject that has an aesthetic interest.
- Zooming while moving the camera: I zoom back from long focal to short focal during the long exposure. During the exposure, I also move my camera. The resulting image is then a combination of the two movements. I apply this technique particularly on plants.
- An original technique: I use long exposure when photographing a bird in flight. I use a slow shutter speed of 1/8 second to 1 second and I follow the bird as much as possible during the long exposure.

In photographing a bird in flight, I encounter the following difficulties:

- It is very difficult to follow the bird full frame. It often becomes a very small part of the image. That's why I am sometimes forced to crop my images.
- Overexposure fades the colors of the bird. It is therefore necessary to play with saturation and exposure to obtain the desired result. To do so, I use Adobe Lightroom Classic, especially the exposure and haze functions.
- The background is either sky or plants. With a sky background, I have the choice to leave a blue sky, or to lighten the picture to have a nearly white background. With a plant background, the results are very satisfying and do not require changes.
- The process produces a lot of pictures, so I have to select those that are interesting in terms of composition, forms, and colors.

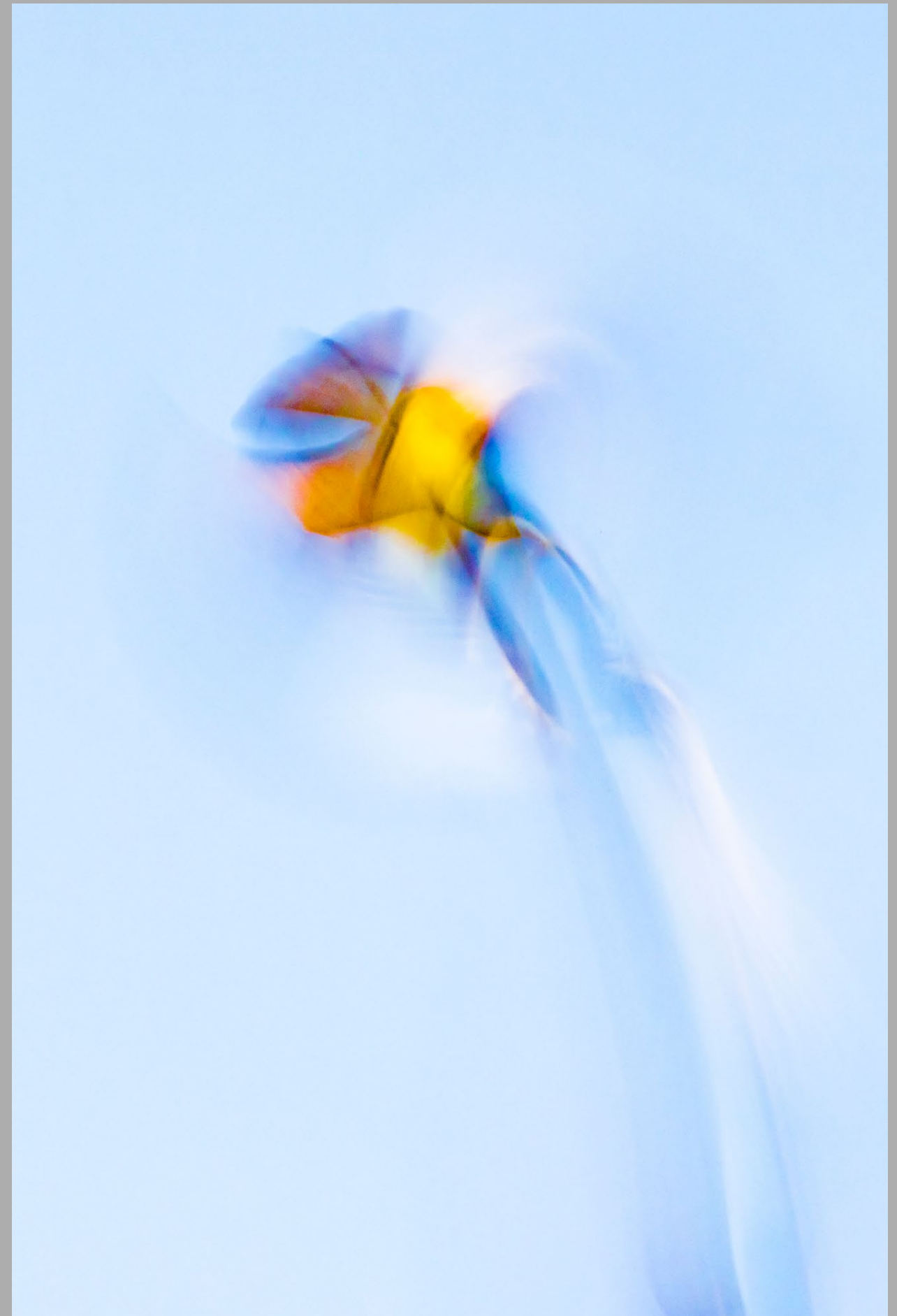
Equipment

I use an Olympus OM-D E-M1 Mark II, and recently a Mark III. With the Mark II, I use ND filters, and with the Mark III, I use the ND system in the camera. This way, I can obtain 1/8 second, 1/4 second, and 1/2 second exposures.

For lenses, I sometimes use an Olympus 40-150mm f/2.8, but I mainly use an Olympus 300mm f/4.

Originality

On big animals (like zebras), I use long exposure, but the animal is always recognizable. With my process on birds, I obtain totally abstract pictures; the bird is not recognizable. Therefore, I achieve my goal of obtaining composition, forms, and colors that are interesting but totally abstract.



~ When a European Bee-eater Becomes a Dragonfly's Head ~



~ Flight of the Dove~

~ Surprise Bird ~





~ Battle of Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) ~

~ Eurasian Jackdaw's Flight (*Coloeus monedula*) ~



~ Southern Carmine Bee-eater in Botswana (*Merops nubicoides*) ~



~ European Roller's Flying in Place (*Coracias garrulus*) ~

Alain's ICM Tip

Take a lot of shots, and then make a selection among them by paying attention not only to photos as a whole, but to crops as well. For example, it often happens that only a small part of the ICM pictures I take is interesting in terms of forms and colors. So, never throw away a photo before taking time to look at all the parts of it.



~ Eurasian Jackdaw's Wings (*Coloeus monedula*) ~