



Pixel Painter Productions
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THE AURORA BOREALIS OVER JOKULSARLON ICE LAGOON SOUTH ICELAND

IMAGE LOCATION MAP

Answers to Kelby One questions

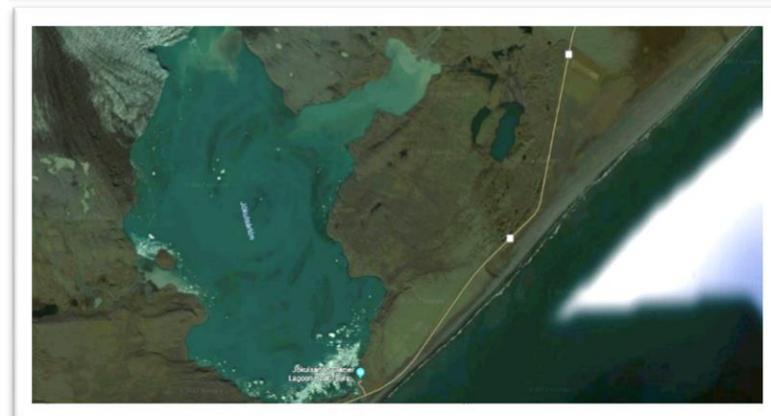
By **Mike Jones AAE, Eng Tech, FIMI, AMIRTE, MSOE, LCGI, ARPS,**
Director The Pixel Painter

What is the tilt of the image:- The Aurora Borealis over Jokulsarlon Ice Lagoon south Iceland.

Where was the image taken location:- Jokulsarlon Ice Lagoon South Iceland. During our planning we realized that the Aurora Borealis would photograph better over a lagoon/water with the opportunity to capture its reflection in the lagoon. The camera also had to point North giving me an opportunity to capture the full light show as it danced in front of me from left to right across the night sky. Hence this particular location was very carefully selected for this reason, it is out in the middle of Southern Iceland with zero light pollution from any source. It is possible to photograph the Aurora Borealis anywhere in the Northern hemisphere as we all know but, different locations on the globe yield different results. Due to Iceland having the same problem as Alaska in the summer i.e. 24 hours of daylight, we had to take the trip during the Icelandic winter period Jan to Feb. Iceland is obviously a cold place but, trust me its colder in winter especially at night when these images were taken.



Iceland Map
Lagoon location



Lagoon
Satellite view of Ice Lagoon

WHY DID YOU TAKE THE IMAGE?

Why did I take the image: - Photographing the Aurora Borealis is not an easy task, it is very challenging subject if you want to capture all the elements of this type of image correctly. I enjoy challenging photographic subjects as I get bored very easily and quickly with mundane photographic topics. We spent two weeks in Iceland waiting for this moment in time and months of planning before we got there, very rewarding and humbling to witness these incredible feats of nature and the world we all inhabit.



IT WAS ALMOST A DISASTER

Was there anything fun about the taking of image: - My wife and I do the best we can as we all do to make life fun but, on this occasion we came very close to disaster. To get this image required an elaborate amount of study and planning I will provide you with the details later. To get to the location we had to walk for 15 mins on the side of a very steep ice lagoon with an incline of 45 degrees. Walking up and down some very steep banks in the pitch black of night i.e. 23:00hrs to 02:30hrs in the morning. We naturally had torches, there was a kind of a path but, difficult to find it in the pitch black despite there being a very bright full moon. Coupled with all of this my wife is fearful of heights, the peaks of these banks were approximately 20 to 30 meters in height at various points. So, my main aim before I can even begin to place the camera on the tripod is to safely and securely chaperone my wife to the location. The journey from the car park to the lagoon water's edge is normally 15 mins in daylight by night and in pitch black over double the time especially with my wife's fear of heights, steep banks and her slow pace. Despite my greatest effort to make sure she was safe she did slip and fall on some loose rocks, falling flat on her front to the ground, she was clutching her tripod close her chest when she impacted with the ground.

So just imagine this scene for minute, here I am on the banked slope of an ice lagoon, 11:30hrs in the pitch black, not another sole in sight, my mobile phone provider does not operate in Iceland, my wife's phone battery has packed up due to the extreme cold i.e. ambient 15 degrees C with a wind chill of 20 degrees C. This expedition had taken months of planning and we had been in Iceland for two weeks waiting for this once in a life time opportunity.

Suddenly and in panic of course I am thinking a helicopter medivac air lift, broken ribs etc., just imagine what flashed through my mind in those milliseconds of panic. Probably the worst thoughts were the selfish ones, i.e. all this time, all this effort and all this money and it's over no photography of the Aurora Borealis. However, you will be pleased to learn that she only suffered some bruised ribs, she battled on for a few more mins to the edge of ice lagoon and sat there with me for another three hours whilst we waited and observed one of the most fantastic light shows on earth, bless you Ann my darling.

As always for these expeditions you need knowledge and experience of where to go and what to do and gear like the "Tundra Ice Truck" opposite. If I am a good boy & stop buying Nikon kit Santa may bring me a "Tundra Truck" for Christmas...dream-on Mike!



CAMERA GEAR AND CAPTURE SETTINGS

What gear did you use to create this image: -
Camera Body: Nikon D3X.

Lens: Wide Angle Nikon 14-24mm f2.8G ED AF-S, this is a brilliant lens, the only one I have used to capture the Northern lights. Nikon ML-3 wired remote control, Slik Grand Master tripod with AF2100 Pro trigger head. Heater blankets for the batteries and spare batteries to combat the effects of the extreme cold on the batteries. LED Lenser H7R Rechargeable Head Lamps and hand held LED torches.

Personal Clothing: four layers of thermal clothing i.e. "ICE GEAR" plus expensive thermal underwear, two pairs of Ski socks, thermal head gear and or a balaclava, scarf. Very thick rubber mats to sit on or very light deck chairs, a large flask of hot coffee/tea. Two pairs of gloves, one pair very thin so than you can operate the camera and a thick second pair to put on over the thin pair when you are waiting for the Aurora Borealis to perform. Thick fur lined ice boots with crampons attached.

Capture method: -

Location: The location must be away from any form of light pollution, i.e. cities, towns or villages. Camera facing North, moon behind me with the Aurora Borealis dancing from left to right in front of me.

Weather: Very close study of the weather as a clear sky is imperative for clean and clear Aurora Borealis light show image capture.

Moon Phase: I wanted a full bright moon for this shot as I wanted the foreground and the edge of the lagoon to be lit by the moon. Plus, the moon had to be behind me, so not only did I need a full bright moon but, its position in the sky was also imperative. Hence the moon phases had to be studied and taken into consideration.

Aurora Borealis: There are an inordinate number of websites that provide you with Aurora Borealis forecast activity, I only use the NOAA websites please find the link below <http://www.swpc.noaa.gov/products/aurora-3-day-forecast>. All the above criteria are a must for successful Aurora Borealis image capture but, pointless if there is no Aurora Borealis activity.

Camera Settings

- Set camera to correct local time.
- ISO 1,600
- Set image quality to RAW
- Set LCD brightness to low.
- Set histogram to RGB.
- Turn on highlight warning.
- Set drive mode to continuous.
- If shutter times are lower than 30 seconds, set exposure mode to aperture priority, and add approximately +1 compensation.
- If shutter times are more than 30 seconds, set exposure mode to bulb and use release.
- Test exposure, consult histogram.
 - After all focus checks are complete close view finder eye piece cover.

Lens

- During the day i.e., set-up location: Tape lens focus ring, autofocus on infinity object, switch lens to manual focus.
- Night time on location: Manual focus using Live View and loupe, then tape lens focus ring.
- Take test shots to ensure sharpness.
- Occasionally check for frost on the lens.

Final settings: after some test shots, checking the image for sharpness I settled with an F stop of 3.2, and a shutter speed/exposure time of 10 secs at ISO 1,600

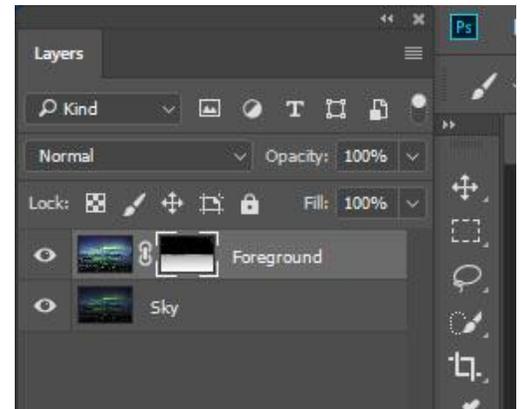


WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT THE IMAGE?

What do you like about the photograph: - What I like and as I mentioned earlier there was an inordinate amount of planning that went into capturing this image. It was very rewarding after all the planning, time, effort and money that went into the image to finally capture exactly what I set out to capture and had pre-visualized. For me the image has also captured the emotional tranquility of the moment, had it not been for the extreme cold and my poor ladies bruised ribs I could have easily sat by the side of this lagoon all night. The crystal glass like ice debris trail in the foreground and to the left foreground have been captured in all their glory. The ice is straight off the glacier and then floats about in lagoon for months before it is washed up on the shore of the lagoon. The floating around for months cleans the ice of all impurities by which time it is crystal clear like glass. In then flows out of the lagoon to the sea and the process is repeated as it melts further and is now washed up on the sea shore as shown opposite.



What Software did you use to create this image: - Photoshop CC, this image was definitely an in-camera creation due to the very precise planning and methodology to capture it in camera, see above for the detail. Photoshop was used i.e. "camera raw" to only slightly tweak the Exposure, Clarity and Vibrance. In Photoshop two layers, one exposed for detail in the foreground and the second exposed for detail in Sky. Foreground is the top layer with a layer mask, layer mask on this level with a gradient masking the sky and revealing foreground detail below.



Do you have a website and or social channel: - Please find below the link to my website <http://www.thepixelpainter.co.uk/>. I do not participate in of form of social media, I do not have enough time to do so.



HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A KELBY ONE MEMBER?

How long have you been a Kelby One Member: - For ever and ever, from the very early days of Kelby media and NAPP. I am not sure exactly how long perhaps the records will show if they go back that far? I think I became a member somewhere between 1999 to 2000, it was around the time Scott launched international membership for NAPP, he wished that he had named the company International Association of Photoshop Professionals.

Ben Willmore had a full head of blonde hair with no grey hairs, Larry Becker had no grey hair and still worked for Apple at that time, Dave Cross had not joined the team at this point and had much more hair on his head than he has today.

Hey guys just for the record I too have joined the no hair on head brigade as my level of maturity improves every year!

NAPP sent window stickers out with your membership package along with a certificate of membership from Larry Becker. At Photoshop World NAPP would issue a shoulder Attaché case...P.S. I still have some of mine, along with a baseball cap, pro-pass badge holder and a T Shirt. However my baseball cap has fallen to pieces.

There was also such a beast as a real paper hard copy version of Photoshop User Magazine that was shipped to international members.

Photoshop came in a box on a CD with a hard copy of a user manual. At Photoshop World seminars trainers talked about "Easter Eggs" Strange Cargo and Udo the cat that burped if you typed Burp. Oh..those were days.....

