

Aaron Collett

A fascination for power stations turned into a photographic passion for architecture



AGE: 30 **OCCUPATION:** Quality Manager

CAMERA: Nikon D200

WEBSITE: www.aaroncollett.co.uk

"I had no interest in photography whatsoever when I was growing up. In fact, I only bought my first digital camera – a secondhand Minolta DiMAGE 7, in 2003, for a holiday to Spain. However, since an early age I've had a thing about power stations – in particular Battersea Power Station – probably because my Dad used to work in one as an engineer. I bought Pink Floyd's 1977 *Animal* album on the strength of it, as it was used on the album cover.

"From this interest in power stations developed a bigger interest in architecture. I prefer the more modern buildings: I like the shapes, angles and its more abstract nature. ↴

CITY OF ARTS & SCIENCES, VALENCIA

"This shot was taken on the final evening of a weekend trip to Valencia in February 2006. I set up the camera on the tripod and stood in the same spot for about an hour, taking a shot once every ten minutes or so to capture the changes in light and cloud formations."

Nikon D200 with 18-70mm lens.
Exposure: Five seconds at f/16 (ISO 100).



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"I try and find something removed from what you normally see. For me, it's all about the use of space shapes, lines of symmetry and skies"

Mind you, if you look at my website I actually dabble in portraiture, live music and landscape photography too. I only really started to take pictures more seriously after being bored at my parents' house one day; I messed about with the Minolta's macro function and the results intrigued me and left me wanting to know more. I came across the ePHOTOzine website and became addicted to trawling through all the different images I found in the galleries.

"I bought my first DSLR, the Nikon D70, in January 2005 and I've since moved on to a D200. I bought it to try my hand at landscapes, including architecture too – I was inspired by what I saw on websites. My work colleagues knew I was becoming a

keen photographer and I was asked to shoot some corporate portraiture – they were really pleased with the results and I realised that I enjoyed experimenting with my photography.

"But my inspiration is architecture; getting up and out early and seeing places when others are not about – cities are great for this. I particularly love London and Norman Foster's work, such as the 'Gherkin' and have travelled to Berlin, L.A. and Valencia recently too. I don't go for the typical scenes, but try and find something removed from what you normally see. For me, it's all about the use of space, shapes, lines of symmetry and skies. I have a clear objective when I head out – I am looking for specific lighting conditions and I prefer shooting

OPPOSITE PAGE: MORE LONDON PLACE
"On the spur of the moment I decided to take a trip down to London one Saturday. When I arrived, the weather was rather unkind to me and so I resorted to taking a few detail shots of the new buildings around the More London development."
Nikon D200 with Sigma 10-20mm lens.
Exposure: 1/125sec at f/5.6 (ISO 100).

THIS PAGE: BATTERSEA POWER STATION
"This was one of the first shots taken with my Nikon D200 on a cold January afternoon in 2006. Following a couple of test shots to try and ascertain the right composition, I decided to give lots of space for the sky and to capture movement of the trains."
Nikon D200 with 18-70mm lens.
Exposure: 3.6 seconds at f/22 (ISO 100).





"My hotshoe spirit level is almost permanently attached, as it's essential for perfect horizons. And I must admit to being a little fussy about lenses"

OPPOSITE TOP: LOWRY BRIDGE, SALFORD QUAYS
 "I arrived at this location far too early and ended up having to wait around for about an hour and a half until I was happy with the right amount of light."
 Nikon D200 with Sigma 10-20mm lens.
 Exposure: 20 seconds at f/8 (ISO 100).



in the morning. I use a tripod and a remote release for absolutely everything that I shoot, with the mirror lock-up function too – I don't want an image ruined by camera shake. I'll spend a couple of hours exploring the area to get the right angles, foreground details and whether I need any filtration, such as a polariser or ND grads. My lens choice is important too, getting in too close or too low with a wide-angle creates all sorts of distortions I want to try and avoid. And I must admit to being a little fussy about lenses. I dread to think what I've spent, my Nikkor 17-55mm f/2.8 and 70-200mm f/2.8 lenses weren't cheap, but I want the best optical quality. My hotshoe spirit level is almost permanently attached, as it's essential for perfect horizons. When I first started, I'd fill two or three memory cards per shoot, but now, I may only take four to five

shots of a location. If the lighting is not right, I'll not take a picture and plan to come back another day.
 "I'm pretty much self-taught and prefer to get my images right in-camera rather than play in Photoshop, which I'm not really a big fan of for my architectural and landscape work, other than for basic sharpening and cloning out dust etc.
 "I have a few places on my 'To Go' list: New York, San Francisco and Paris are all there, as is Iceland. I'm shortly off to Budapest and looking forward to the challenge of getting a new slant on the classic architecture there. But I also want to go back to Battersea again. I have had a life-long love affair with the place – I've been a few times now and waited and waited, but I don't feel as if I have the perfect shot in the perfect light, yet. I will do, one day... when pigs fly!" ✨

THIS PAGE: ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL.
 "I originally shot an identical composition, of the much photographed view of St Paul's Cathedral with the Millennium Bridge, on my Minolta in 2004, but returned for this particular image a year later with my Nikon D70."
 Nikon D70 with 18-70mm lens.
 Exposure: 30 seconds at f/11 (ISO 200).

OPPOSITE BELOW: URBAN ABSTRACTS
 "I find it's always worth wandering around a location to look for the best viewpoint and angles to shoot from. I sometimes take a few test shots to see what the images will look like – most of my shots rely heavily on the sky for added impact."