Over the course of his 30-year career, renowned photographer Art Wolfe has worked on every continent and in hundreds of locations. His stunning images interpret and record the world’s fast-disappearing wildlife, landscapes and native cultures, and are a lasting inspiration to those who seek to preserve them all. Wolfe’s photographs are recognised throughout the world for their mastery of colour, composition and perspective.

His photographic mission is multi-faceted. His vision and passionate wildlife advocacy affirm his dedication to his work. By employing artistic and journalistic styles, he documents his subjects and educates the viewer. His unique approach to nature photography is based on his training in the arts and his love of the environment. His goal is to win support for conservation issues by "focusing on what’s beautiful on the Earth." Hailed by William Conway, former president of the Wildlife Conservation Society, as "the most prolific and sensitive recorder of a rapidly vanishing natural world," Art Wolfe has taken an estimated one million images in his lifetime and has released over sixty-five books, including the award-winning Vanishing Act, The High Himalaya, Water: Worlds between Heaven & Earth, Tribes, Rainforests of the World and The Art of Photographing Nature, Light on the Land and the controversial Migrations.

His signature work The Living Wild, has more than 70,000 copies in print worldwide and garnered awards from the National Outdoor Book Awards, Independent Publisher, Applied Arts and Graphis. Art’s latest books are Dogs Make Us Human and Animal Art.

Art is the proud recipient of the Photographic Society of America’s Progress Medal for his contribution to the advancement of the art and science of photography; he has been awarded with a coveted Alfred Eisenstaedt Magazine Photography Award as well as named Outstanding Nature Photographer of the Year by the North American Nature Photography Association. The National Audubon Society recognised his work in support of the national wildlife refuge system with its first-ever Rachel Carson Award. Magazines all over the world publish his photographs and stories, and his work is licensed for monograph retail products as well as advertising. Numerous North American and international venues have featured his travelling exhibits.

Art has ventured into the world of television production with “On Location with Art Wolfe,” “Techniques of the Masters” and as host of “American Photo’s Safari.” He made his public television debut with the high definition series
“Art Wolfe’s Travels to the Edge,” an intimate and upbeat series that offers unique insights on nature, culture, and the new realm of digital photography. The thirteen-episode first season garnered American Public Television’s 2007 Programming Excellence Award—unprecedented for a first season show. The thirteen-episode second season garnered five Silver Telly Awards, their highest honour, for outstanding achievement. It has been broadcast more than 180,000 times in the United States alone and is now seen worldwide.

The son of commercial artists, he graduated from the University of Washington (UW) with Bachelor degrees in fine arts and art education and was named to the UW Alumni Association’s magazine list of 100 “most famous, fascinating and influential” alumni of the 20th century.

Art spends nearly nine months a year travelling, carefully researching the locations as well as pre-visualising the photographs he wants to take. He is an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society, a Fellow of the International League of Conservation Photographers and serves on the advisory boards for the Nature’s Best Foundation and Bridges to Understanding.

He donates performances and work to environmental and educational groups every year.
Interview with Art Wolfe

A large proportion of the 65+ books you have produced are unashamedly advocates for greater environmental stewardship of the planet’s disappearing wildlife and its fragile ecosystems and cultures. Where did the forces that forged these deep caring characteristics in you, come from?

My advocacy comes from my childhood experiences. Growing up in 1950s-60s suburban Seattle, I was one of those kids who was fascinated by and explored the wooded ravines. I disappeared into them for hours with my little plant and wildlife guide. By the time I was seven I had memorised all the local flora and fauna. It was a natural progression to travel further afield as I grew older, and here I am today, travelling professionally for decades.

I’m told that you have photographed in over 100 countries over 30+ years. What are the elements that influence your decision to choose a photography destination?

100 is an exaggeration, but I’ve travelled to a lot of unique locations in my day. I like to say that the places I choose are on the US State Department’s travel advisory list as they usually are the most fascinating. Aside from my own knowledge of the world, I have a network of friends and colleagues I draw ideas from. I jump online occasionally to explore potential destinations. The ideal location can deliver many photographic subjects: wildlife, landscape, and culture. A couple of places like this that come to mind are the Bolivian Altiplano with its severe landscapes, colourful flamingos, and remote Andean peoples; and Kakadu National Park with its vast marshlands, stone country, and Aboriginal legacy.

Your “Travels to the Edge” series are simply stunning and are a collection of great experiences for viewers. How was this program born? What drives you to still do more series?

When you think about it, almost all the photos I have taken are really intended to inform, educate and entertain. I
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shoot for other people rather than just solely for myself, and with the TV show I realised I could reach a much broader audience with just one episode than collectively the 65+ books I've done. The show was born out of a desire to bring the world home to people's living rooms after 9/11. “Travels to the Edge” is really about communication, education, and it’s a call to action to look at the world around us and take a moment to really care about it.

When I watched some of the “Travels to the Edge” series I experienced what I can only describe as a lifting of my own spirit. Has the making of the series increased your spiritual connectedness with the natural world and influenced your photography?

Undoubtedly, making the series has influenced my photography. I don't profess to any religion, but when I am out photographing in one of these very special places, I do feel a spiritual uplift and this connectedness has deeply affected me.

I recently photographed alongside you in Antarctica and China. In China, you demystified the aesthetic, you taught people to see images that were at first hidden and it became evident there is a strong synthesis between your livelihood, your passion for photography and your enthusiasm to educate – this is a rare combination. Why is teaching (of artistic endeavour) such a noble profession for you?

I have a very strong drive to leave the world a better place than when I entered it. In other words, I like to contribute to a greater society and teaching is noble. If I can pass on a bit of the wisdom and knowledge I've accrued over the years, pass on that love of the environment, it makes me feel good. I don't have children, so my legacy is the work that I have created and the people who I have touched.

What and where in Australia would you particularly like to photograph and why?

Not surprisingly, I've always been drawn to the outback. Uluru...
Art Wolfe is an exceptionally iconic formation and I have had wonderful times photographing the Devil's Marbles. Having grown up in a part of the world where giant, thick forests abound, I love the austerity and openness of the landscape and the center of Australia certainly delivers all that and more.

Following your visit to Australia, you will presenting a series of workshops in South Africa. Has Africa had much influence on you as a photographer and if you could travel to and photograph any one place in Africa, where would that be? I would love to travel to the new country of South Sudan (which, of course, is on the State Department travel advisory list). This is home of Sudd wetland, one of the largest in the world, and the Dinka. They are perhaps the tallest people on the planet, and herd large-horned cattle. It would be an extraordinary opportunity that few have had to photograph these people.

Your formal studies are in fine art and art education. Today, you are one of the most renowned photographers on the planet and your recent photography is clearly becoming more abstract. Are you melding your painting and photography together?

Absolutely and I find no greater joy than the creation of imagery for my current project "The Human Canvas". It combines my painting background, photography skills, love of the environment and fascination with indigenous cultures. Any artist desires to create something unique during their career and I think this particular project really stands alone from all the work I've ever done.

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You have a significant birthday coming over the horizon! As there is no sign of you slowing down, what new work can we expect to enjoy in the next decade – more TV series, an exhibition of your paintings, more abstract photography, or some complete surprises? Of course, no one can predict the future, and given the fact that I respond to inspiration and circumstance, who knows what I might come up with. But truly, my main goal is an exhibition for "The Human Canvas". I do enjoy the role of elder statesman for the profession and no doubt, I will continue to be called upon to expostulate about this or that and the state of nature on the planet. But who really knows what lies before us? We can only suggest a path, not foresee it.

As we come to the close of the interview, I have one final question; treat it as an "Irish Question", if you wish. What is the one question you have never been asked by previous interviewers but is the one question you waited for, every time, but it never came and you would love to answer?
How long is the stream in your yard, Art? About 80 feet. But seriously, if you had all the money in the world what would you do with it? Well, all the money in the world and all the money I need are two completely different things, so I’ll take the second one. I would be doing exactly what I’m doing now, just on a much grander scale: educating, publishing, exhibiting, creating, and giving, of my time and expertise.

**ART WOLFE IN AUSTRALIA IN 2012**

Iconic Images International will be bringing Art Wolfe to Australia in March 2012 to run a series of public seminars and workshops in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth. Details of these events may be found at [www.denisglennon.com](http://www.denisglennon.com). Art will also be available to conduct exclusive “One-on-One with Art Wolfe” private sessions. The focus here is for a small number of like-minded photographers to spend a whole day with Art in a private learning environment. The maximum number in these groups will be five – a rare opportunity. Anyone interested should contact Denis at either [denis@denisglennon.com](mailto:denis@denisglennon.com) or on 0418 923 103.