



# Michael Hallett

Photographer **Michael Hallett** combines multiple images on a single canvas. Here, he explains the stories behind some of them

**Michael Hallett is a professional photographer, photo historian, educator and biographer.** And as if this wasn't enough to keep him busy, he also manages to find the time to create these striking images, which he calls "photo constructions".

Hallett first started creating these eye-catching montages after feeling limited by the constraints of his camera's viewfinder. "It was a sense of extreme frustration that led me to extend the boundaries of time and space that a single exposure, single viewpoint photograph was unable to offer," he explains.

## A simple approach

To create his montages, Hallett uses a series of individual images that he places on top of each other in layers, as opposed to stitching and merging them into one another. He uses the smallest digital compacts he can to take the source shots.

"Each photo construction consists of anywhere between three and 100 or more individual images," he explains. "This gives an angle of view between 180° and 360°. This way, both the photographer and the viewer become surrounded by the scene. Each construction offers a more involved sensation of what it was like to be there. These images see their subject from the inside looking out, extending an awareness of time and space."

The seaside often features in Hallett's constructions, many of which can be seen in this showcase. "I was born on Portland and brought up in Weymouth," he reveals. "These are perhaps reasons enough to return to the seaside and photograph the things that evoke my earliest memories. So, on one level, my Seaside project is pure self-indulgence." »

## Djemma el-Fna, Marrakech

5 April, 2007

"It was a whole sensory experience. The music and the noise, the smells and the tastes were as important as the picture. This 180° photo construction was exposed over about an hour, making some 280 individual images, of which less than 100 were used. The images for this photo construction were probably made in the dusk of the evening, though I may have cheated a little! The picture brings back the total experience for me."





# Out there... Showcase



## Blackpool Tower, the Laughing Donkey and Me (left)

19 June, 2003

"It's often difficult to avoid my shadow appearing in the picture area, and this is an unusual example where the inclusion of the shadow is central to the storyline. It is remarkable how just a small movement of the body can change the entire shadow in the picture."

## Po Lin Monastery, Lantau (below)

27 November, 2009

"All of my photo constructions measure in excess of one metre on their longest side. The digital file can be reduced in size down to book or magazine pages, or smaller to postcards or even business cards. The scale can completely change the storytelling of the published image."



## Lifeguard on Bournemouth Beach (right)

8 August, 2005

"Frequently, less can be more. It is not always important to include all the detail in the picture. We know the sea and the sky will continue outside the frame to the left of the picture and we have a good idea of the outline shape of the lifeguards' yellow hut. And the view is placed within a context, with Bournemouth Pier in the background."



## Callao Salvaje, Tenerife (above)

23 January, 2009

"Some of my photo constructions rely on people, but this picture is solely reliant on the concrete architectural form. The manner in which the picture breaks up is reminiscent of Cubism and is emphasised the further away the image is from the natural vanishing point. It accentuates differences rather than merging them."



## Paignton Beach (above)

7 July, 2007

"Another example of less being more. There are three elements to this image, all of which came together; the texture and scale of the foreground against the reddishness of the Devon sand, the people enjoying the beach in the late afternoon, and the amazing sky. This is the cover picture for my book, *Seaside Portfolio: Bournemouth to Dartmouth*, available through [www.blurb.com](http://www.blurb.com)." »



# Out there... Showcase

## Bournemouth Beach (right)

29 August, 2005

“Having been a student in Bournemouth, returning to this particular seascape was recalling a well-cherished view. While not particularly evident in this photo construction, the relationship between the close proximity of the beach to the cliff and the smart hotels are recurring elements when picturing Bournemouth. This is all to do with memory and recall. Again, I'm part of the picture.”



## Essaouira, Morocco (below)

6 April, 2007

“The light is very different in North Africa. It is the intensity reflecting off the light tones of the buildings and the cobbles that makes this photo construction successful. The screen version using transmitted light is more successful than the image on the printed page viewed with reflected light. It is this quality of light that makes the picture look more like a stage set than the realism of a bustling and lively town.”



## Jaffe Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong (below)

25 November, 2009



“This 360° photo construction pushed the boundaries just that little bit more. As the whole image is of a small area, when you look upwards there is a repetition in the sky that has been emphasised here rather than diminished. The two men in their green tops pulling the green plants on a trolley provided that little bit of magic to the picture.” 📷