



Wildlife Photography

Paul Hutchinson

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Wildlife photography is a genre of photography concerned with documenting various forms of wildlife in their natural habitat. It is one of the more challenging forms of photography.

As well as requiring sound technical skills, such as being able to expose correctly, wildlife photographers generally need good field craft skills. For example, some animals are difficult to approach and thus a knowledge of the animal's behavior is needed in order to be able to predict its actions. Photographing some species may require stalking skills or the use of a hide/blind for concealment.

While wildlife photographs can be taken using basic equipment, successful photography of some types of wildlife requires specialist equipment, such as macro lenses for insects, long focal length lenses for birds and under-water cameras for marine life. However, a great wildlife photograph can also be the result of being in the right place at the right time.¹

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wildlife_photography#cite_note-1
(retrieved 07 July 2016)





















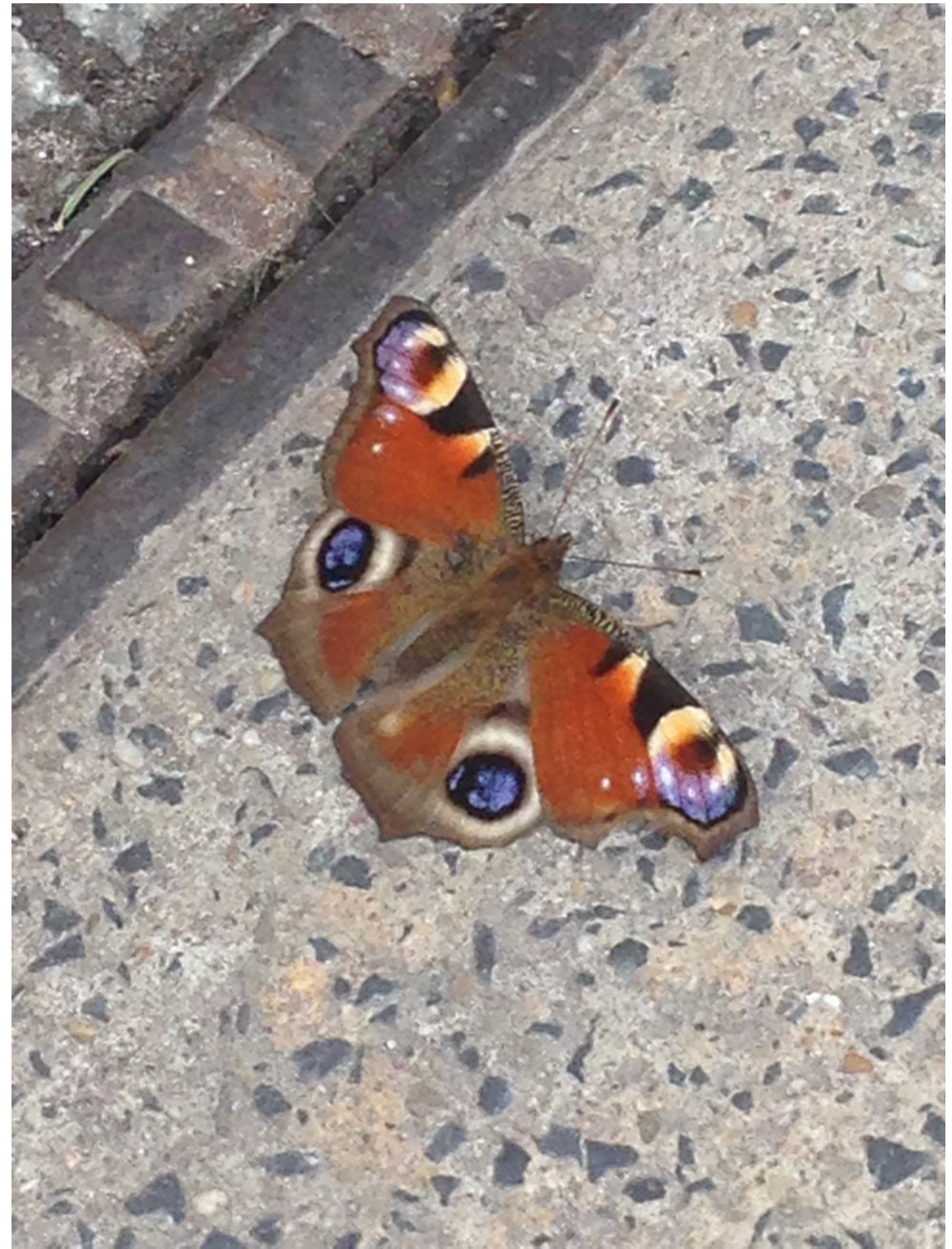


























Impenetrable Thickets

Infrastructure is at the core of any modern city. Urbanity, therefore, is the linking of structures: the suppression of individual trajectories in favour of a collective movement. At the last stop of Berlin's underground line U8, in a culturally diverse, still quite gritty and yet, by now, partly gentrified part of Neukölln, monkeys, tigers, parrots and okapis have taken over the walls. Since measures have been taken by the city to redesign the interior of the transport hub, it feels like stepping into a jungle full of wondrous animals such as you would find in a children's picture book.

Impenetrable thickets, raging streams and distant howls lie within this dense wilderness. It's quite peculiar to see tigers coming out of their hiding and silently observe elephants roaming through a valley, underground. And suddenly stainless steel bars cut through the sky and the animals' bodies. The architecture of the U-Bahnhof violently intrudes, the surfaces, signs and outposts of civilisation, the trash bins, doors and emergency buttons appear in the midst of a lush vegetation.

Wildlife Photography is a social and visual journey that navigates us through one of the most commonly used non-places: an underground station. These images, both in their original appearance and in Paul Hutchinson's photographs, however different, give a certain sense of what nature is, or has become, to us urbanites: how we mimic and refer to it as a world that we are estranged from but so badly long to keep in touch with. After all, the U-Bahnhof Hermannstraße in its present form might be one of the most literal realisations of the metaphor of the urban jungle. Hutchinson roams along these subjects whilst in transit, not shying away from using the full digital zoom of his phone camera, whenever the situation demands.

Some images seem to examine the intentions of the makers of this jungle, while others play with the idea that an abundant nature has been confined by human means, physically and visually. Here, nature somehow pushes back softly. By juxtaposing the context and subtext of the architectural items, the pillars and floors, the tiling and doors, the discontinued surfaces, Hutchinson creates circumstances in which the constellations themselves gain new meaning and authority, eventually transforming a given setting into a comment on the state of the world. Curiously observing, putting judgement aside, he extracts moments of candour in this patched-up scenery, turning it against itself, as if holding up a mirror to see the unexpected, noisy beauty of the urban jungle life. He is on a photo safari.

Meanwhile, some images are scattered distinctively throughout the book, evidently taken over ground, interrupting the stream of public order and disorder: a "real" plant, a "real" girl in a leopard jumpsuit, a butterfly, a hand feeling a leaf. Inward goes outward goes inward, it seems, and we learn that one other thing Hutchinson seems to be concerned with is conveying the seemingly banal but ultimately essential experience of growing familiar with formerly alien subjects and situations. And this sense of wonder, beauty and belonging, translated into an urban jungle where everything has been seen a million times, is maybe what *Wildlife Photography* is all about.

Back in the U-Bahnhof we see these funny animals in their natural habitat, looking at us as if we were around just to enjoy their sheer presence. As if they were there to make us happy and optimistic about the future. They seem to have accommodated our need to put bins and benches and fire extinguishers in their jungle, and they even seem fine with a tag on their face. The jungle, we learn, is a human experience.
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