

science

# LENS

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"WHAT I VALUE IN LIFE IS QUALITY  
RATHER THAN QUANTITY  
AS IN NATURE THE OVERALL PRINCIPLES  
REPRESENT A HIGHER REALITY  
THAN DOES THE SINGLE OBJECT"  
ALBERT EINSTEIN

science**lens**.

**PHOTOGRAPHING**  
SCIENCE, INDUSTRY  
AND TECHNOLOGY



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## From the editor

HELLO EVERYONE,  
and thanks for joining  
me for the first issue of  
Sciencelens Monthly for  
2011. With the festive  
season now well and  
truly disappearing in the  
rear view mirror, we can

start looking ahead at what I hope will be a happy and prosperous  
year for all of you.

With many organisations putting significant amounts of time, effort  
and funding into publications such as company brochures and  
Annual Reports, I thought it might be useful to have a discussion on  
the importance of communication between the different players  
creatively involved in publications and reports. Specifically, I believe  
it is critical that there should be clear communication between  
the editor(s) providing the textual context, the graphic designer(s)  
responsible for the layout of the document, and the photographer(s)  
contributing visual material.

Expanding on some of the ideas above, I discuss a specific photo  
session, to illustrate the idea of covering different angles/applications  
in a scientific photo shoot.

Finally, we share some information on the New Zealand Institute of  
Chemistry 2011 conference happening later in the year – with 2011  
being the International Year of Chemistry, this is bound to be an  
important event on the New Zealand conference calendar.

Oh, and turn to page 8 for a very special photographic offer for all  
newsletter readers.

Enjoy the newsletter – as always I look forward to your feedback and  
comments.

Gerry

## FEATURED ARTICLE

# Creative Communication

THE TASK AT HAND - the planning, design and layout of a  
company information document, featuring research highlights  
from the past year. It is a big and important publication, aimed  
at key stakeholders, and intended to grow the client base of  
the organisation. The graphic design team, in conjunction with  
the editor assigned with responsibility for the document, have  
been brainstorming the look and feel, and have a strong design  
concept in mind.

Meanwhile, the marketing department has commissioned  
a photographer to create a portfolio of photos covering the  
scientists and the projects to be featured in the publication. The  
photographer has completed the task, and the photographs  
produced cannot be faulted – classic corporate portraits done in  
subtle shades of blue and grey. Formal and serious, as has always  
been the style of the company.

The only problem is that the publication, created to expand the  
client base of the company, is being aimed at a slightly younger  
and more dynamic market. The document has been edited to  
speak in a young, modern language, and the designers have a  
vibrant and slightly edgy look in mind, with lots of diagonal lines  
and warm reds, yellows and oranges. The newly commissioned  
photographs – classic, formal and serious – are worthless in this  
context, and the company is left with two choices: abandon the  
planned publication design, or commission another new set of  
photographs. Both these options are unnecessary, costly and  
time-consuming, and could have been avoided had there been  
open and regular communication between the editor, designers  
and photographer.

While the above is just a theoretical scenario, similar situations  
occur regularly due to a lack of communication between  
the different players required to provide creative inputs or  
contributions to publications.

Even when the photographer is clearly briefed on the  
requirements regarding the content, style and proposed look  
and feel of photographs needed for a specific publication,  
working too strictly within these constraints during a  
photo shoot might also be limiting. The graphic designer  
or communications manager may well be aware of other  
publications coming up soon, covering the same subject matter  
in a different context or with a different style. For example,  
photos of the scientists and projects mentioned in the scenario

# Creative Communication

above  
may also be required  
for the company's Annual Report, which is  
typically a more formal corporate document. Thus, if the photographer  
only took dynamic, angled and non-traditional photos as per the requirements of  
the original document we discussed, an extra photo shoot will have to be  
arranged to create the more formal and traditional images required  
for the annual report. However, if these additional slightly  
longer term requirements were also communicated  
to the photographer, he could make sure that  
both dynamic and traditional angles  
were covered in the photo  
shoot.

## Getting by without an art director

In  
advertising,  
and in particular in  
the large professional  
advertising studios,  
individuals are assigned  
specific coordinating roles to  
assure that all the creative  
inputs (editorial copy, design  
elements, visual material  
etc) are aligned to the same  
goal. Creative directors, or  
sometimes art directors, are  
responsible for the creative  
concept, and communicate this to  
the graphic designers, photographers,  
copywriters etc.

In publishing, art directors typically work with the publications editors. Together,  
they work on a concept for sections and pages of a publication. Individually, the art  
director is mostly responsible for the visual look and feel of the publication, which  
means communicating with designers, photographers and illustrators. The editor,  
on the other hand, has ultimate responsibility for the publication's verbal and textual  
content.

In the Corporate sector, however, organisations seldom have the luxury of having a creative  
director or art director on staff, and as such the marketing and communications staff, editors,  
graphic designers and photographers need to take responsibility on themselves to ensure that  
communication channels between them remain active and open.

Even if the brief is open and undefined, the photographer can take responsibility by enquiring about  
the application of the images, and the proposed look and feel of the document they are shooting for.  
In addition, as mentioned earlier, he/she may do the client a great favour by also covering other angles  
and styles not specifically asked for. Importantly, however, the photographer should clear this with the  
client first – there is nothing as uncomfortable as when the photographer believes he is doing the client  
a favour by covering additional angles and styles, while the client feels the photographer is merely trying to  
make up time by producing extra images that have not been requested in the brief.

## The bottom line

Clear  
communication is  
critical, both to ensure  
that the outputs of the  
photographer match the  
requirements of the design  
team, and to ensure that  
there are matched  
expectations between  
the client and the  
different service  
providers.



FOLLOWING OUR DISCUSSION ON creative communication, it might be useful to spend some more time illustrating the idea of photographing the same subject in different ways, in order to facilitate multiple application of the photos.

## Covering all the angles

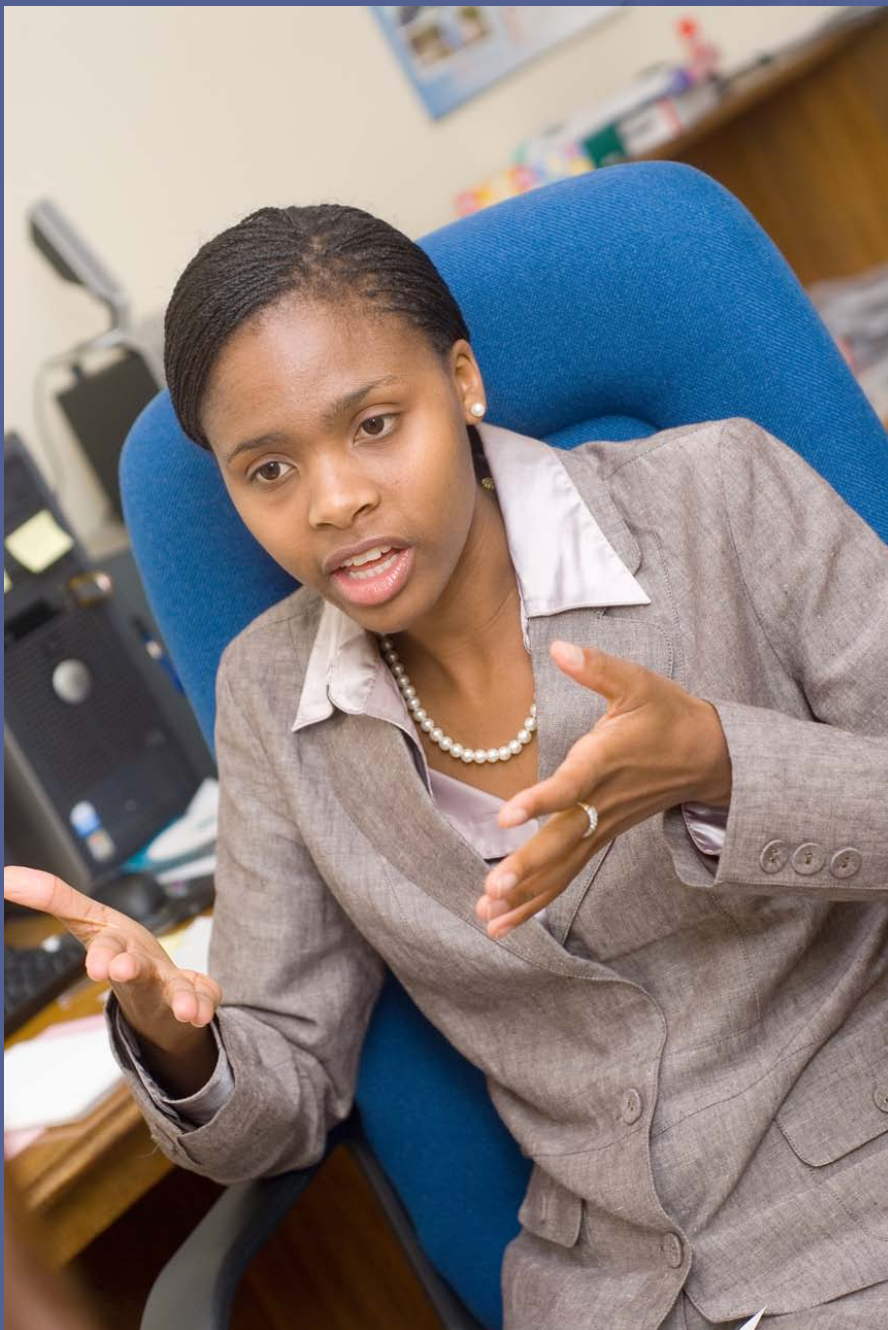
To support this discussion I will use an earlier photo shoot I was commissioned to do, photographing a young scientist, Dr Tumi Semete, whose exemplary research was to be featured in a number of publications.

The first point worth noting is that the shoot coincided with an interview with the scientist, conducted by the company's publications editor. This had the advantage that the focus was not exclusively on

the photo shoot, so I was free to move around and photograph different angles and subjects. Also, by paying attention to what was being discussed in the interview, I had more insight into what I needed to capture to compliment the article and other related applications.

Secondly, I was briefed beforehand that the photographs would be used in a number of different publications, so I needed to be comprehensive in my coverage.

Following below are examples of the different angles and types of images that can be captured during a science photography shoot, illustrating the range of applications that can be covered without spending much extra photography time.



### ***The documentary angle.***

*Capturing some shots during the initial interview phase, enabled us to get good informal, natural and unposed documentary style images highlighting the personality of the subject.*

**The person-focused lab portrait.** Technical 'in action' portraits can be created by photographing the scientist in his/her work environment. Being a portrait, the focus needs to stay on the person, and techniques like shallow depth of field can be effectively used to blur the surrounding detail in the shot, thus ensuring that the environment does not draw the attention from the subject. Such a portrait could effectively illustrate a primarily person-focused article.



**The technology-focused lab photo.**

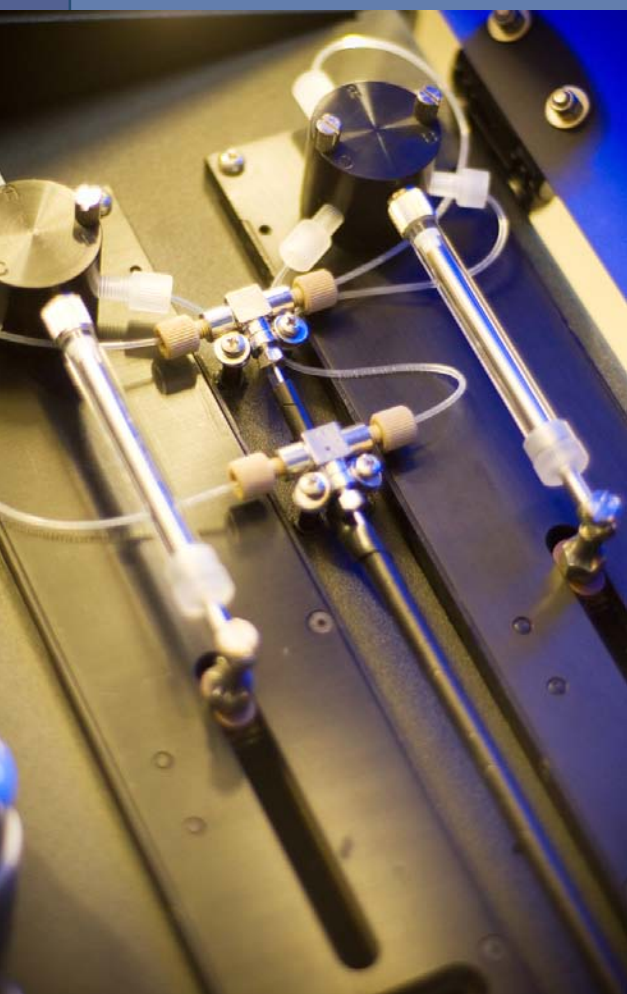
While keeping the human subject prominent in the frame, this photograph differs from the portrait above in the sense that the laboratory equipment is kept in focus, and it takes up a prominent part of the image. Focus therefore shifts to the technology, making this photograph useful in an article with a more technical research angle.



**The people in action lab shot.** If other laboratory personnel are available, it is useful to set up some shots, or photograph from such an angle, that other people are introduced, either as part of the focus of the image, or in the background. This results in a more generic laboratory image which can be useful as a general illustrative image for brochures and other publications.







**The technical details.** While photographing a scientist in a laboratory environment, keeping an eye out for interesting details and technical equipment for detail-shots adds another dimension to a shoot. These types of images can be used effectively as additional design elements in publications, websites etc, and often end up being useful to the client even after the person-specific portraits become outdated.



### **The traditional portrait.**

Pretty much a must-have during a shoot like this, capturing a good formal, corporate portrait is critical. For a more corporate feel, and to provide variety from the laboratory images, this photo was staged in a boardroom environment.





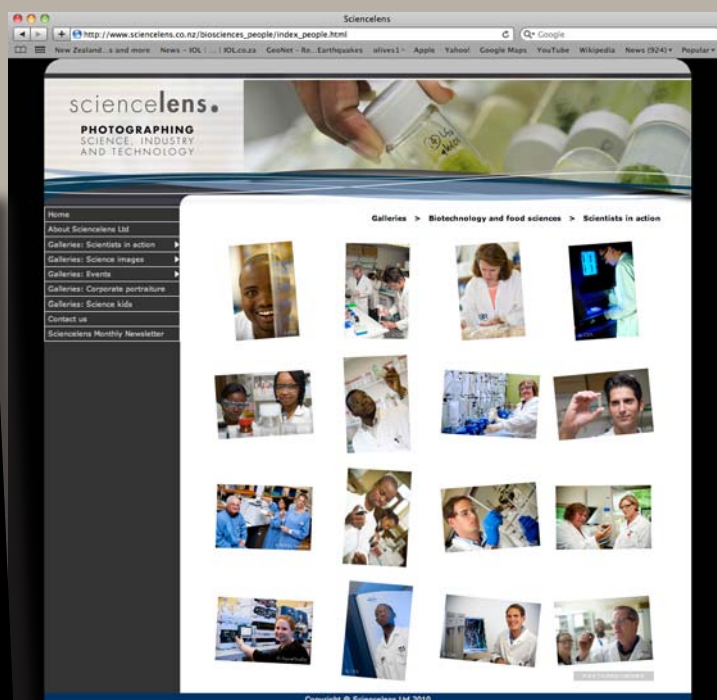
**The informal portrait.** While traditional, formal portraits are important for corporate publications, having a more funky, informal portrait can often be invaluable. In this particular series, this image ended up being used extensively, in particular in publications aimed at promoting careers in science to younger audiences.



SHOULD YOU BE INTERESTED in viewing a comprehensive portfolio of the Sciencelens photographic offering, pop over to our virtual home at [www.sciencelens.co.nz](http://www.sciencelens.co.nz), and have a scroll through the different photo galleries.

The site also has up to date info on our rates and seasonal offers, as well as a collection of past newsletters, in case you missed any of these.

Visit the  
**Sciencelens web**



# New Zealand Institute of Chemistry Conference 2011



International Year of  
**CHEMISTRY**  
2011

27 November - 1 December 2011

The University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand

The New Zealand Institute of Chemistry Conference 2011  
is to be held during the inaugural  
"International Year of Chemistry"

## Plenary Speakers:

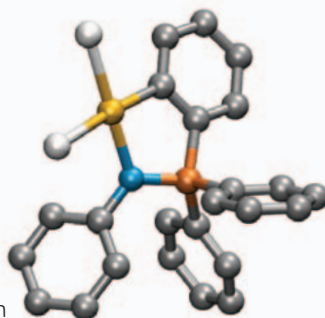
**Omar Yaghi**, Irving and Jean Stone Chair in Physical Sciences, Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry, Professor of Molecular and Medical Pharmacology; University of California, Los Angeles, USA

**Duncan Bruce**, Professor of Materials Chemistry, University of York, UK

**Neil Ward**, Professor of Analytical Chemistry, Chemical Sciences, Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, University of Surrey, UK

**Michael Bowers**, Professor, Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, University of California, USA

**William Fenical**, Professor and Director, Marine Research Division, University of California, USA



For more information visit: [www.nzic2011.co.nz](http://www.nzic2011.co.nz)

## Gerry's Birthday Special

**\*\*FREE  
photo shoot  
during  
February!\*\***

FEBRUARY IS  
BIRTHDAY MONTH  
for Sciencelens  
photographer  
Gerry le Roux.

Since Gerry loves nothing more than being active on a photo shoot, we have created a "birthday special", offering all readers of this newsletter a **complimentary free photo shoot of up to 2 hours during his birthday week, 21-25 February**. For shoots in excess of 2 hours, we offer a 50% discount on our normal rates (which, for shoots of 4 hours or longer, effectively means 2+ hours free!)

This is an honest bargain with no strings attached – processing and delivery of your photos on CD is included. To make use of this offer, simply contact us via email or telephone, and use "Gerry's Birthday Special" as your reference.

That should keep us pretty busy, so contact us immediately to arrange your shoot and avoid disappointment!

**Conditions:** This offer includes free travel up to 50km from our base in Palmerston North. Basic travel rates will be charged for locations beyond the 50km radius. The offer applies for corporate people shoots, technical laboratory photography and events coverage.

sciencelens ●  
PHOTOGRAPHING SCIENCE, INDUSTRY AND TECHNOLOGY

## Quote of the month:

*Which of my photographs is my favorite?  
The one I'm going to take tomorrow.*

Imogen Cunningham

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