

Clip: A Moment With Ingrid Taylor - Interview  
Empirical Magazine - July 2012

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A MOMENT WITH

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INGRID  
TAYLAR

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EMPIRICAL INTERVIEWS INGRID, A WRITER AND PHOTOGRAPHER WHO HAS RECENTLY MOVED UP THE COAST FROM SAN FRANCISCO TO SEATTLE, AND EXAMINES HER WORLD OF PHOTOGRAPHY.

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PHOTOS: Ingrid Taylor





**Empirical:** Hi Ingrid. Your photography work in San Francisco, especially the bridges, is what initially caught our eye. How did you get started in photography?

**Ingrid:** I've had a camera in my paws since I was seven years old. We were expats in Europe, and my parents bought me a Kodak Instamatic to document my experience. That's not to say that I took anything of significance, or even anything that verged on decent composition. But, because of that gift, it became the norm for me to carry my camera in one hand and my stuffed toy in the other.

**Empirical:** That's a nice image. I think many of us started in similar ways. When did you begin taking photography more seriously?

**Ingrid:** I was a casual shooter for a long time, even with the film SLR my dad and I picked out after high school graduation. I had a 50mm lens, and I used that camera – a Fujica AX-1 – like a snapshot device. It was token usage of a powerful tool. There were two significant events that inspired me to go further with my photography. The first was my job with About.com, writing and editing their San Francisco website. The second was a simultaneous volunteer gig my husband Hugh and I started at a wildlife hospital in the Bay Area. That's when I first realized the potential of my camera as an instrument of my personal passions.

**Empirical:** What was it about those events that made such a difference?

**Ingrid:** The old adage – write about what you love, photograph what you love – came to fruition through my lens simply because I finally discovered what it was that I loved to photograph. And that was ... the San Francisco Bay Area and, in particular, the nature and wildlife of Northern California. I was on foot several days a week with my camera, covering neighborhoods and events around the Bay Area. Because of my immersion with wildlife at the hospital, my eye was also trained for the anomalous shapes and movements in that landscape – the wild things to which I'd always been drawn. It helps that Hugh has an extraordinary photographic eye, and through his lens, I began seeing much more of the marvelous in my everyday world .... my allusion to Bill Moyers who said that creativity is "piercing the mundane to find the marvelous."

**Empirical:** That's a beautiful way of putting it. We think it's marvelous how you not only have an eye for angles, shapes, and color in architecture, but how you penetrate through that mundane into the world of nature. How did that develop?

**Ingrid:** Through my telephoto, I began to connect with my subjects in a way that allowed a relationship of sorts. This contrived intimacy with my home terrain and with my wild subjects got me addicted to the process. More importantly, photography drove my commitment to wildlife and wild spaces in ways that changed me and my perspective forever. I think it's important to add that I con-



sider nature photography a genuine privilege, and do my best to abide by good field craft and strict wildlife photography ethics.

**Empirical:** You mentioned, too, that you wrote an online column. Is that how you got your start in writing?

**Ingrid:** I started off writing a column for a natural health magazine, did various forms of writing throughout the years, including some technical and copy writing. My most recent full-time writing job was my work with About.com. When I left About, I transitioned into research work through the serendipity of an internet search. An author found my work through About.com and hired me as a researcher for two ongoing series of thrillers. I supplement that work with freelance jobs as they come up, I also maintain my *nature blog*, and I'm always working on personal writing projects on the side. You know, as they say in L.A. – "multiple projects in various stages of development."

**Empirical:** What are your goals in photography at this point?

**Ingrid:** I regularly donate photos for environmental or wildlife causes – for auctions, fundraising events, or nonprofit publications. My primary motivation, outside of the pure enjoyment of shooting, is to use my camera as a conduit. I always hope I can translate even a morsel of what I see through my lens, to someone who might be viewing my images. If a photo can, in some way, inspire someone else to care about the subjects I photograph, then

I feel I've accomplished something. I'm constantly honing my technique, and have numerous aspirations in terms of expanding my skills and endeavors.

**Empirical:** What kind of equipment do you use?

**Ingrid:** I use Olympus gear, for the most part. My constant companions are my Olympus E-3 and my walk-about 70-300mm and 14-54mm lenses. This summer, I'll be experimenting with a micro-four-thirds (mirrorless) camera and also a new wildlife lens.

**Empirical:** Can you walk us through some of your photographs? I love the Space Needle shot.

**Ingrid:** It's called "Wolf Moon at the Needle." I shot this as a Wolf Moon rose behind the Seattle Space Needle. This image is actually two exposures layered together – one exposed for the Needle, one for the moon. Nothing else was altered in terms of juxtaposition or size of the moon.

**Empirical:** As I said, I was immediately drawn to your bridge photography, including the Golden Gate shot. Can you tell us about that one?

**Ingrid:** Yes, I thought that was the bridge photo to which you were referring. I took a long exposure of the Golden Gate Bridge



on a July evening. The slight haze in the sky reflected back some of the light below, and rendered the tones more golden. Shot from Fort Baker in Sausalito.

**Empirical:** Where did you find all those birds in the bird shot?

**Ingrid:** I call that "Shorebird Nation." This was shot in the East Bay, at Arrowhead Marsh in Oakland. I sat at the far end of a dock as huge numbers of shorebirds were arriving to sit out a wind storm. Each arriving group landed behind the rest, nudging the whole flock forward toward me. Eventually, the dock got so full of birds, these shorebirds were just feet away from me and my camera, not bothered at all by my presence.

**Empirical:** There's another lone bird shot here, too, with beautiful gold coloring around it.

**Ingrid:** I photographed this scene in Redondo Beach, in Southern California. This one Brown Pelican was perched on a breakwater during a vivid display by the setting sun. The sunset had the appearance (to me) of a volcano erupting behind the silhouette of the rock wall and the pelican, hence the name of the photo, "Pelican Fire."

**Empirical:** We see that you like to get close. That macro shot of the drops on the leaf is spectacular.

**Ingrid:** That's called "Conveyer Belt of Raindrops." It's one of my favorite macros, taken in a beam of sun, after a Seattle downpour. The drops pictured are, in fact, raindrops. I don't use spray bottles or other artificial means of creating droplets.

**Empirical:** The reflected skyline shot is very creative. It took







me a while to figure out where those textures were coming from.

**Ingrid:** It's called "Reverse Reflected." This is part of the Seattle skyline, reflected in a huge puddle on a waterfront pier. I flipped the image upside down, so the texture you see in the "sky" pictured here is actually the puddle and pier boards, and the "reflection" below is actually the real person, skyline, and sky.

**Empirical:** The sky around the volcano is amazing. What's going on there?

**Ingrid:** There are spectacular weather days where lenticular clouds form above Mt. Rainier like flying saucers. This was shot as the sun went down, from a hillside south of Seattle. The colors are real, reflecting the remnants of daylight, sunset and the coming twilight. I call that one "Rainier and Its Lenticulars."

**Empirical:** It's a wonderful collection, Ingrid. Thank you for sharing them with us.