

# ONE THOUSAND WORDS...



© Tom Bol

1000

They are the moments that have impacted our lives... the indelible images that become etched into society's collective mind. In the relatively short time that man has used the power of photography to educate, inspire, document and shape modern culture, Nikon cameras have captured some of the most powerful and poignant moments ever witnessed. Evoking emotion and provoking thought, long after first view – a powerful photograph can render a poet's adjectives pallid; here then is such an image, "a picture is worth a thousand words..."

## TOM BOL



© Mel Luning

"I'm all about bringing home what it really feels like to be there—the light, the action, the environment. When people look at my images and say 'Wow, that's amazing, I wish I were there!' I know I've succeeded."

Tom Bol is the quintessential master of outdoor adventure photography—he crates dynamic images that capture the visceral intensity of actual experience. His love of challenging assignments and his uncanny ability to deliver breathtaking images under the most demanding conditions in the remotest regions of the world has earned him international acclaim. When publications like National Geographic Adventure, Alaska, Paddler, Runner's World, or The Wall Street Journal require authentic, compelling pictures of 'impossible' subjects like scaling the Himalayas, sea kayaking in Patagonia, penguins in Antarctica, or Olympic skiers in a blizzard, Tom Bol is the go-to guy. The reason Bol is so successful is simple—he's not only an accomplished and talented photographer, but also a genuine dyed-in-the-wool outdoorsman who relishes the challenge of climbing icy mountain passes, adventure cycling in the boonies, and camping out in the middle of nowhere for weeks at a time. He lives with his wife Cree and son Skyler in Fort Collins, Colorado, and most weekends they're out camping, climbing, canoeing, hiking—and, yes, making memorable family images.

"I was a photography enthusiast back in high school," recalls Bol, "but I didn't really get into it on a pro level until I got to college. Before I enrolled at Colorado State in Ft. Collins, I took one of those aptitude placement tests, and amazed myself by scoring very high on creativity and the arts. I guess that was in the back of my mind when I finally flashed on the fact that I could have a productive and fulfilling career as a photographer. At the time I was a journalism major shooting with my first Nikon, an all-manual FM. My big break came when I signed up with the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) based in Wyoming. Pretty soon I was hiking, climbing and kayaking in places like Patagonia, Alaska, and India, going out on 30-day expeditions to nowhere, all the while photographing the exploits of my fellow adventurers and the glories of the natural environment."

"I chose Nikon SLRs from the very beginning," observes Bol, "because they provide the ruggedness and utter reliability that are essential for my kind of work—even when I'm shooting at 35 below at 20,000 feet. Over my 14 years as a pro, I've literally evolved into the whole Nikon SLR lineup, from the 35mm FM2 to the F5 before going digital, then on to the D100, D70, D2H, D2X, D200, and now the incredible D300 and D3. The technology and performance of Nikon DSLRs have advanced remarkably over the years, but one thing has never changed—these cameras deliver state-of-the-art image quality while standing up to extreme conditions and the rigors of professional use."

"Besides adventure sports and extreme outdoor photography, I also specialize in environmental portraiture, that is, people in their environment," notes Bol. "And since penguins are just 'people' of a different kind that remind us of ourselves, the charming and comical picture on this page of a lone Gentoo penguin going for a stroll is an excellent example. The image also has a serious side because the bird is headed to the ocean to look for food in order to survive, and will probably have to dodge leopard seals. I took the shot in Antarctica while leading a Nikon-sponsored American PHOTO Mentor Series trek. To get to the penguin rookeries we sailed from Ushuaia at the southern tip of Argentina, across the Drake Passage to South Shetland Island, then on to Cuverville Island. The trip took a little over a week, but we were rewarded by a rare sunny day."

"Even in bright light, shooting a penguin on the ice with a handheld 300mm super-telephoto NIKKOR is tough, but the incredible 51-point autofocus tracking system in my Nikon D300 had no trouble keeping critical focus on the bird. The phenomenal performance of the NIKKOR 300mm f/2.8G AF-S VR lens also helped to make this image a winner—it's tack sharp, and the VR system works great, delivering crisp, detailed results even when shooting handheld under adverse lighting conditions. Checking the precise focus on the D300's big 3.0-inch LCD is like watching Star Wars—you don't need a tethered laptop. The ability of the D300 to capture full highlight detail in the white parts of the bird and surrounding snow, along with shadow detail in the dark areas is a real breakthrough in D-SLR photography, and so is Nikon's latest AF system. Before the Nikon D300 and D3 I was 'old school' and focused manually quite often. I now rely on AF almost exclusively even for fast-moving subjects in poor light—the focusing speed and accuracy of these cameras is absolutely outstanding."

"Another big plus is that Nikon rules when it comes to ergonomics," observes Bol. "Even the bigger, full-frame D3 is perfectly contoured and feels just as great in your hands as the D300, and both models are very 'intuitive'—real photographer's cameras with super user interfaces. The image files I shot in Antarctica with the D300 look spectacular—the color fidelity is right on. The image quality at high ISOs is truly revolutionary. I'm also in love with NIKKOR lenses, especially the new AF-S VR Zoom-NIKKOR 70-200mm f/2.8G IF-ED—it's the hot ticket for shooting sharp handheld images in the field. I'm also a big fan of the Nikon AF-S DX Zoom-NIKKOR 17-55mm f/2.8G IF-ED, the AF-S DX Zoom-NIKKOR 12-24mm f/4G IF-ED, and the two Fisheyes. When shooting kayaking with a helmet camera the AF DX Fisheye-NIKKOR 10.5mm f/2.8G ED on the D300 and the AF Fisheye-NIKKOR 16mm f/2.8D on the D3 give me a unique paddler's perspective!"

"My goal is simple," says Tom Bol: "To create images that convey my personal connection to the subject, whether it's a landscape, a person, a travel picture, or magic moment in adventure sports. When I've succeeded in doing that I know I've made an intimate connection with the viewer as well, and that's really what photography is all about."



At the heart of the image™ 