



AN AIR OF ABSTRACTION

James Lawson profiles the work of Hervé Bernard, an innovative French photographer who is equally at home with his SLR or his Sun workstation

Hervé Bernard is a Paris-based freelance photographer who specialises in the illustration of abstract concepts. He works with conventional photographic techniques as well as having wide experience of different areas of digital technology. Examples of his work reside in the permanent collections of prestigious institutions such as the French National Library and l'Établissement Public du Louvre.

Hervé spent two years working on screen interfaces with the innovative French videotext company Minitel then topped off this experience by working in video for a small film company. This launched him into a career as a freelance and he numbers many major French companies amongst his clients.

Currently, Hervé uses a Sun SPARC 10SX workstation with 120Mb of RAM and other appropriately high specification peripherals. He's been working with this equipment for two years and last year acted as one of Adobe's beta testers for Photoshop 3.0 on the Sun. He uses a wide variety of other hardware and software such as Graffiti from Caldera as well as better known packages like Live Picture and Photoshop. This experience has put him at the head of many digital imaging workshop groups and he writes for a number of magazines in the imaging market as well as speaking at conferences and doing consulting work.

However, there's no doubt that with this man, the image is king and the methods used to generate it are inciden-

tal in comparison. He says: "First I find the idea and then after I find the technology. I will pick up what interests me; technology is the way to the goal, not the goal itself."

He shoots all the originals himself wherever possible. "This gives the best photomontages because you take them at the right angle with the right lighting," said Hervé.

"This makes it easier to deal with on the computer and it makes for a quicker

job if you own all the rights to the original."

A multi-talented individual, Hervé has played with painting matte backgrounds for films and does straight black and white pictures as a sideline. All the pictures shown here are projects from his personal portfolio.

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This comp of Concorde metro station and a beach was executed on a Scitex Prisma to evaluate the system. It is simply a comp of the two images, one of the metro station and one of the beach and water, with some retouching.

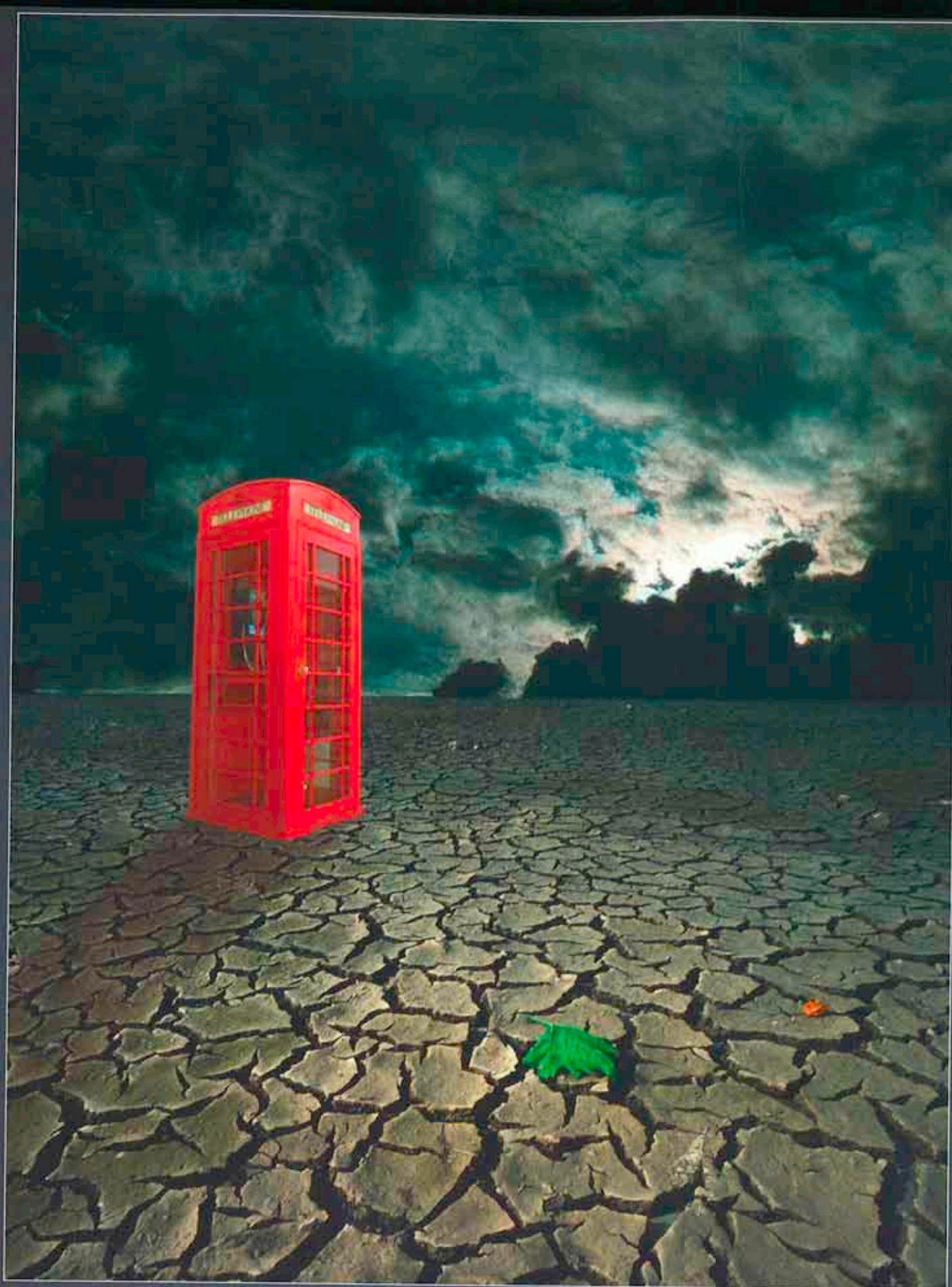
This image of a balloon was comped from four shots: the balloon, a panoramic shot of the sky, one shot for the basket and one for the logo. The logo was originally taken from a shot of a truck and had to be warped to fit the balloon correctly. The image was generated using a Barco Creator system.



Both these images were created to bring in fashion commissions hence the subject matter of gloves and the model's face. The originals were shot with B & W Polaroid film then composed using Photoshop 3.0 on a Sun workstation.

This picture is one of the few with a title – 'Alarm Bell' – and the environmental message is obvious. Using three originals, the image was put together on a Mac running Live Picture.





This image, named 'Cabine', is intended to illustrate the theme of the future of the telephone in the telecommunications industry. Starting with three originals, the Graffiti package from Caldera was used to comp and retouch the images. Hervé commented on the ease of using multiple layers and how tools can be combined to make new ones. Specifically, the contrast of the ground was increased slightly, the sky was actually taken from the sky's reflection in a fountain and the British phone box was shot in a hotel in America!