



*Great White Shark Triptych*, by Gary Rose. This photo was taken in Guadalupe Island, Mexico, and printed on white aluminum panels. Gear: Nikon D500 camera, Tokina 10-17mm lens at 17mm, Nauticam housing, Inon Z330 strobes. Exposure: ISO 320, f/11, 1/125s

Text and photos by John A. Ares, Sheryl Checkman, Larry Cohen, Anita George-Ares, Matthew Meier, Brandi Mueller, Gary Rose and Olga Torrey

**We asked our contributors to create an underwater “triptych,” and they returned with an artistic range of color, black-and-white and toned compilations, from abstract close-ups to wide-angle shots, featuring a variety of marine life, large and small, as well as divers, on reefs and wrecks, and in open water, lakes, and even an aquarium. Here, *X-Ray Mag* contributors share their favorite images from the tropical waters of Fiji, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Egyptian Red Sea, Bonaire and the Cayman Islands, to the temperate waters of the US East Coast and California.**

# Triptychs

*Contributors' Picks*





Photo 1. (far left) Original post-production image; Photo 2. (left) Image prepped by extending negative space of blue water on the left border to create better balance for the triptych; Triptych mounted on a wall (below)

## Triptychs



All photos were taken with a Nikon D500 camera, Tokina 10-17mm lens at 17mm, Nauticam housing, with Inon Z330 strobes. Exposure: ISO 320, f/11, 1/125s. SECOND ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: Photo 3. Left third of triptych; Photo 4. Middle third, first cut; Photo 5. Middle third, second cut; Photo 6. Right third of triptych; Photo 7. (previous page) Final triptych assembled

### Great White Triptych — Not Just Another Portrait

Text & photos by Gary Rose, MD

Often, when I look at shark photography on social media, in magazines, or at many presentations, I have noticed that, although the photos are of interesting sharks and technically excellent, they lack size—the wow factor! Why is that? Most underwater photographers are so caught up in the capture, that they forget about creating a story or an imaginative and artsy photograph, and just photograph the standard side-view portrait. Granted, many underwater photographers have taken a huge step out of their comfort zone, just to dive with and photograph sharks, and are thrilled to bring home a portrait photograph of a shark to share with friends

and family. Let's take it to the next step.

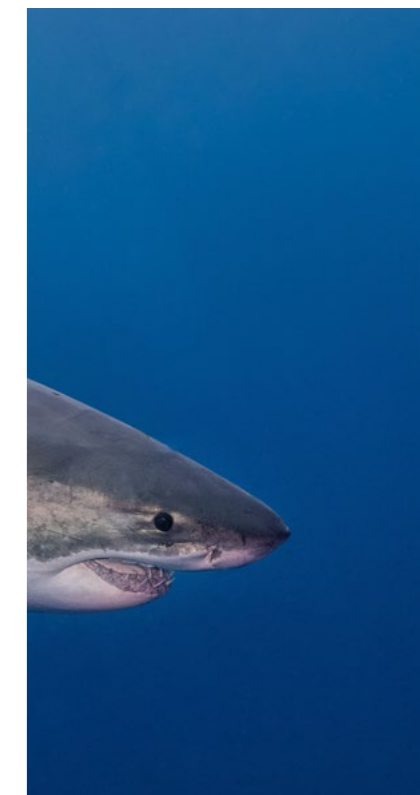
I usually set out on a shark photoshoot with a plan. Once I am in the water, I consider the visibility, lighting and my surroundings—blue water, reef or sand. After a few test shots to maximize the color saturation and balance of negative space (which will frame and not visually distract from my subject), I am ready to shoot.

Photo 1 is an iconic portrait of a great white shark. The viewers' attention is immediately focused on the huge and jagged teeth, and the bottomless depth of the sinister black eye. Next, the viewer will follow the natural flow along the streamlined body and react to the bulk, and the mating scars, of the great white shark. This portrait is a little more interesting because the shark is slightly at an angle

as it was gliding towards me. The intense deep blue of the negative space highlights the magnificent silver and white coloration of the shark.

I was familiar with the groundbreaking artwork by Damien Hirst, featuring a fully preserved tiger shark in a triptych, which was enclosed in glass cases. He rocked the art world in 1991 with this unique creation (ed. – entitled *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*). I decided I would try to emulate him—with a great white shark tryptic, on metal.

In the original (Photo 1), the shark tail was abutted against the border of the photograph. To improve the balance of the three panels of the triptych, I added negative-space pixels to the left border (Photo 2). Photos 3 to 6 demonstrate where I made the cuts to pre-



serve the sleek and efficient torpedo-like outline of the shark. Note the slight change between Photo 4 and Photo 5. In the latter, the cut is a couple of inches closer to the snout, maintaining the outline, flow and proportions of the great white. The surface markings of the shark, particularly the

countershading at the border of the silver and white coloring, were my road map.

The final relationship of the three panels, and correct spacing between them, is critical. Too much or too little space between the panels creates very unnatural border step-offs and throws off the

movement of the viewers' eye as well as the natural flow from the snout to the tail (Photo 7). The spacing must be correct. An additional bonus of creating a triptych such as this, is that it creates a feeling of the great white shark actually gliding right out of the deep blue. Visit: [garyrosephotos.com](http://garyrosephotos.com)

