



Perfect Panning

An interview with Pedro Dermaux



Above, British GT, Spa.
Canon EOS 1D X Mk II; 200-400mm @200mm; f18 1/25s; ISO 50.

Previous page, Spa Classic
Canon EOS 1D X Mk II; 16-35mm @35mm; f16 1/30s; ISO 50.

What camera equipment do you use?

In general, I use Canon 1DX and 1DX Mark II DSLRs coupled with a variety of lenses: Canon 200-400 / F4 EF IS USM; Canon 1.4 Extender; Canon 24-105 F4; Canon 16-35 F2.8; Sigma 50 F1.4 art. I also use a Leica Q fixed-lens compact camera with a 24MP full-frame sensor and a 28mm F1.7 Summilux stabilized lens. When it comes to panning shots I use the 200-400/ F4, the 1.4 extender, and the two wide angle zooms.

How do you choose shutter speeds for panning shots?

It is a question of balancing the distance to and from the object, together with the available light, background and speed of the object. The further away the subject the slower the shutter speed and vice versa. With the 200-400 I use pretty much all the shutter speeds possible while with the 24-105 and 16-35 mostly between 1/8 and 1/40.

How much preparation do you do in terms of choosing good locations on the circuit?

For panning shots one of the most important things for me is the background and the colour or contrast you can get from it. I always make up a plan, where to start and then work my way around the track. It is important to say that most times it doesn't work out. A lot depends on the time I have available, for example a sprint race versus an endurance event. In my case, I am usually working for teams, drivers or manufacturers and it is vital that I am able to deliver a variety of images from different angles and places.

Goodwood Revival.
Canon EOS 5D Mk III EF; 24-105mm @47mm; f22 1/15s; ISO 50.





In strong light do you encounter difficulty with overexposure i.e. as a result of very slow shutter speeds?

Very often! When I am creating panning shots for customers it is very often a case of trying on other cars first and adjusting all the time until I find the correct setting I want to produce a result I am happy with.

Do you pan with the motordrive on or as a single frame?

For panning at relatively low shutter speeds I find that single frame works best for me. I much prefer to have one very good photo instead of lots I am not completely satisfied with and which I then have to spend ages selecting, deleting and editing. In my job it has become very important to be able to deliver almost immediately so that customers can publish my images as soon as possible on their various social media channels.

How do you make sure the camera follows the car and you don't pan too fast or too slow?

Practise makes perfect I guess, being patient and holding your breath.



Above, Creventic 12H, Spa
Canon EOS 1D X; 200-400mm @200mm; f29 1/15s; ISO 50.

Opposite, Spa 6 Hours..
Canon EOS 1D X; 200-400mm @282mm; f6.3 1/40s; ISO 50.



GT4, Brands Hatch.
Canon EOS 1D X; 200-400mm @362mm; f20 1/13s; ISO 50.



What focus settings do you use?

Single point usually when the car is rather small in the picture, cross points for when the car is bigger.

What do you use (software etc) to edit your images post-shooting?

Adobe Lightroom.

What advice would you give someone starting to use this technique?

Practise, practise, practise. Learn your settings, like for example with canon you can first try with the TV stand (shutter priority) study the outcome and then try everything with manual settings. Be prepared to spend a lot of time selecting and deleting bad photos. Finally use a zoom so you can play around, always try different things.