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Vision To Visuals

Tracking Tigers

Pulling together a multifaceted exhibit that tells a credible story

By Baldev Duggal



Carol Amore

Photographer-filmmaker Carol Amore approached me several years ago with a vision to create a visually engaging and scientifically credible exhibition about the Bengal tigers of India. Her film expedition developed a compelling story using photography and high-definition video to document the rare life of a wild tigress and her two cubs' quest for survival in the Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh, India. The result was an award-winning *20 Ways to Track a Tiger* photographic book and an HD *TIGERS* film that won a CINE Golden Eagle award.

In what I can only describe as a true vision to visuals transformation, *TIGERS: Tracking a Legend* opened on February 1st at the Discovery Science Center in Santa Ana, Calif. This 5,000-square-foot traveling exhibition celebrates the life of a wild Bengal tigress and her cubs. Carol describes *TIGERS* as "high touch and high tech, as it's a sensory-stimulating tiger adventure providing multi-tiered interactives blending science, biology, ecology, geography and natural history through state-of-the-art sound and visual technologies, including rare high-definition footage along with large double-sided photographic Duratrans and canvas visuals."

Carol emphasized that "with only 5,000 wild tigers remaining, the ultimate

goal of the exhibition is to help people globally care to save tigers through a rich and meaningful visual experience." Hopefully, her HD film on tigers and the traveling exhibition will inspire people of all ages to commit to saving wild tigers.

Carol described that finding the tigers was the toughest part of the expedition. The search to find the tigers in golden morning or evening light was the best of all situations in the jungle environment, and only by riding on the back of a three-ton elephant with a 10-foot tripod could she deliver the images of the tiger in its natural environment.

When Carol returned from her expedition, she knew the story she wanted to tell of the tiger's life and allowed the images to continue to influence the shaping of the story and its direction. I was inspired to see these images of wild tigers with remarkable clarity, sharpness and strength of story. I immediately impressed upon her the need to make these images as large as possible and with varying textures to have the greatest impact on the museum visitors. The selection of the Duratrans images was designed for the key story characters, showing the tigress interacting with her cubs. We worked with Carol on image sizing

and color saturation to reflect the tiger's true color, as well as build on the existing sharpness of each image. We were able to scan a 35mm slide and make a 5x7-foot Duratrans without any loss in resolution.

"Their dedication to the details and experience with visual presentations to the public made an important difference in the quality of the final 'Wow factor' in the images," Carol says. "We spent the time to do it right and tested our observations of the images on others as

if they were the museum visitors. We reviewed each print for its composition and the intensity of its color. Great care was taken to judge the image sizes and ensure there were no blurring pixels from scanning a 35mm slide to 5x7 feet."

The 8x10 photo canvases were wrapped in bamboo structures to reinforce the jungle environment and establish the real presence of the tiger at the exhibition's entrance and the tiger's cave.

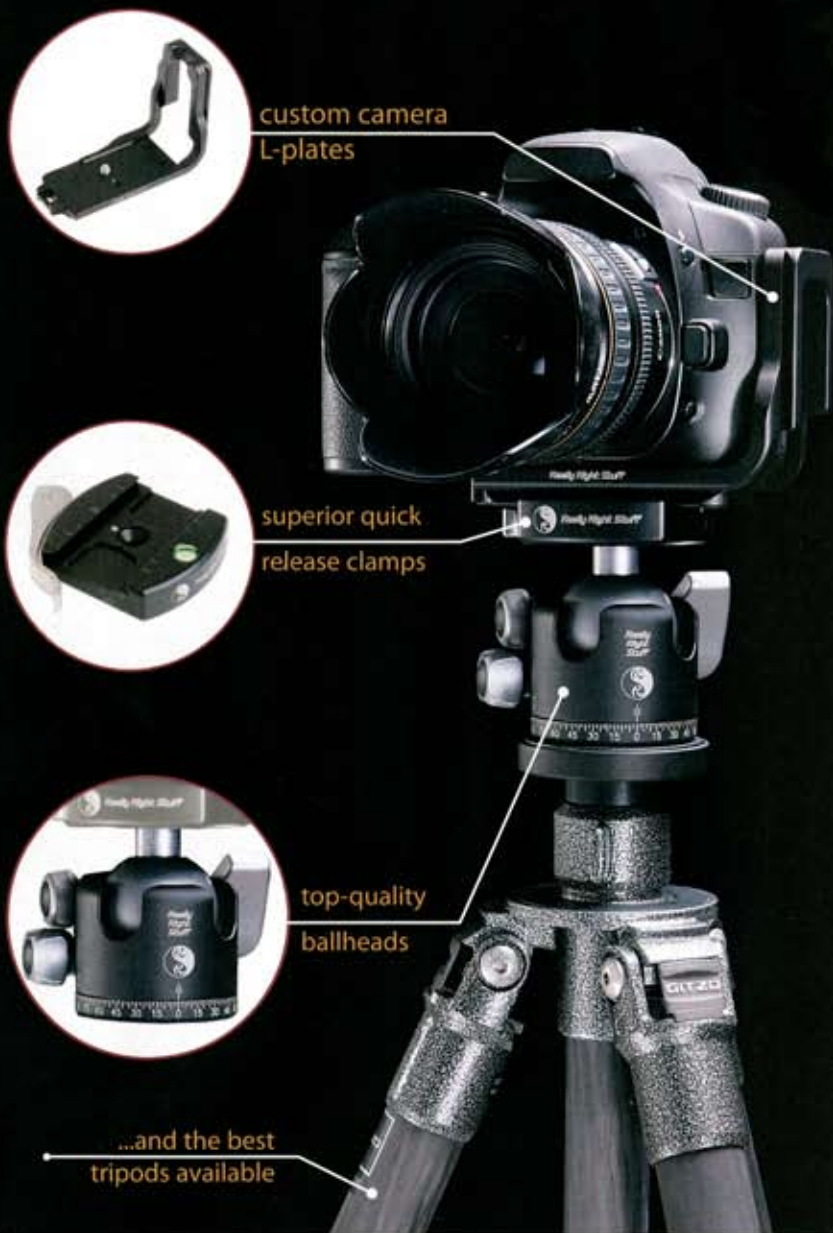
Carol designed the interactive modules alongside leading researchers, inventors and artists/animators. A strategic balance was struck between the exhibition's design using photographs and HD video to weave the tiger's story and by allowing the interactive modules to take the visitor deeper into the discovery process. Using their natural curiosity, visitors map out their own adventure by exploring the *20 Ways to Track a Tiger* in a free-form way.

For the visitor, the transformation to the tracking journey to find the tigress and her two cubs starts at the Elephant Camp. Visitors also learn to identify the tracks of a tiger. Next, the Talk Like a Tiger interactive offers a compelling voice-simulation experience to hear a wide range of unique tiger sounds and feel their related vibrations, including infrasound. The Eyes of the Tiger Night Vision exhibit shows how the



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tiger sees six times better than we do. The Inside the Tiger exhibit has a unique sliding monitor to view the most advanced diagnostic CT scan imaging on tigers. Carnivore Capture and Canine Bite Force encourage visitors to physically engage the force of the tiger's jaws and claws to learn how the tiger hunts, and the award-winning Digi-Track Climbing Wall provides an experience for visitors to interact with 3D sensory sounds and lights on a climbing wall, involving games like a Cub Survival Game. The *TIGERS* HD theater shows the award-winning HD tiger footage combined with surround sound. A tigress and her two cubs have been uniquely re-created by natural history experts with exact body features and stripes and placed on a 360-degree walk-around cave within the exhibition.

As an experienced image maker and producer of the world's leading wildlife publications, Gilbert M. Grosvenor, Chairman, Board of Trustees, National Geographic Society, expressed his reactions to the *TIGERS* exhibition: "Awe-inspiring visuals, inventive interactive exhibits and exciting hands-on explorations are hallmarks of the *TIGERS: Tracking a Legend* exhibition."

Carol worked closely with my colleague Jose Vargas on the image scans, sizing and final layouts for printing. To reinforce the theme of the book, each cave photo rail was designed to tell a day in the life of a tiger through a series of images, with story and fact-based script below the images.

Carol and I had an active dialogue about the visual sequences, their message and how they would translate into Duratrans. "Mr. Duggal and I both knew that the imagery had to have high color saturation," Carol explains. "Mr. Duggal and his team remained very dedicated to the details and clarity, as well as taking into account the viewer's perspective in order to appreciate the large-scale image in an exhibition environment."

Both Carol and I have an interest in

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saving the environment, and the tiger is a visual icon for this important goal. "We feel that the *TIGERS* exhibition is an important step in blending visual beauty with science to inspire others to save tigers," she says. "The beauty conveys a lasting impression and achieves a goal of awareness."

In talking about tigers, George B. Schaller, Vice President of Science and Explorations, Wildlife Conservation Society, remarks, "Even just a glimpse of a tiger, of the fire in its eyes, its massive power, its dignity and beauty—its sheer magnificence—inspires respect, awe and admiration. *20 Ways to Track a Tiger* vividly captures the tiger's allure with extraordinary photographs and engaging information. It renews the desire to protect one of earth's most precious living treasures."

Says Carol, "I respect Mr. Duggal's artistic advice since I know that he cares deeply about how art tells a story and that his heart has an affinity for the tigers of India and the world. We share a mutual synergy in our life goals to make a difference to help wildlife and the environment. Saving wild tigers is our focus. Extinction isn't an option. If an individual follows their passion, they can indeed make a difference."

Carol wants to take individuals on a journey and motivate them to care, to empathize; she sincerely believes these images will do that. Images are the universal translators that leave lasting impressions. Carol has combined her skills as a still photographer and HD videographer to tell a story well told. She has succeeded in controlling a variety of media to paint her canvas of animal preservation. We're grateful for the opportunity to help tell Carol's *TIGERS* Expedition to Exhibition story. DPP

Baldev Duggal, president and founder of Duggal, has been innovating visual solutions for image-makers for more than 40 years. With digital capabilities reaching worldwide, his headquarters covers a block on West 23rd Street in New York City.