

hadn't seen that much of my own surroundings before then. That journey taught me that you don't need to travel far or have a huge budget to find untamed, magical places. You can create captivating images out of things that are meaningful to you in your own backyard.

I'm color-blind—growing up, my Mom would tell me to go get the green trash can and I'd end up grabbing the brown one. I'm the worst when it comes to finding a matching outfit. So I've never looked to capture complimentary colors in my images; instead, I've always looked for contrast. On that trip I was searching for striking, starkly different color schemes that play off of one another: ones that emphasize the difference between light and dark. I can't really say, but I sometimes wonder if being color-blind has allowed me to home in on capturing this contrast a little more than I would have been able to otherwise.

With my eye practically glued to my camera's viewfinder, every day we journeyed along the California coast, I wanted to capture these ocean communities from a personal perspective that anybody who had ever traveled or kayaked along the coast could relate to. It was a mind-blowing experience that taught me more than I could ever imagine. As a kid who wanted to see the world, the days spent on that trip were a much-needed humbling experience. They revealed the wildness that already existed all around me if I was just willing to open my eyes. I realized that adventures can be big or small, it's just a matter of getting out there. There's a beauty in being open to what is available to you, wherever you are, and I truly believe opportunities are really what you make of them. That road trip definitely set the tone for me going forward as a photographer. The idea of spending the time to explore places deeply and immersively, moving through the landscape with greater care and awareness, has become a constant in my career ever since.