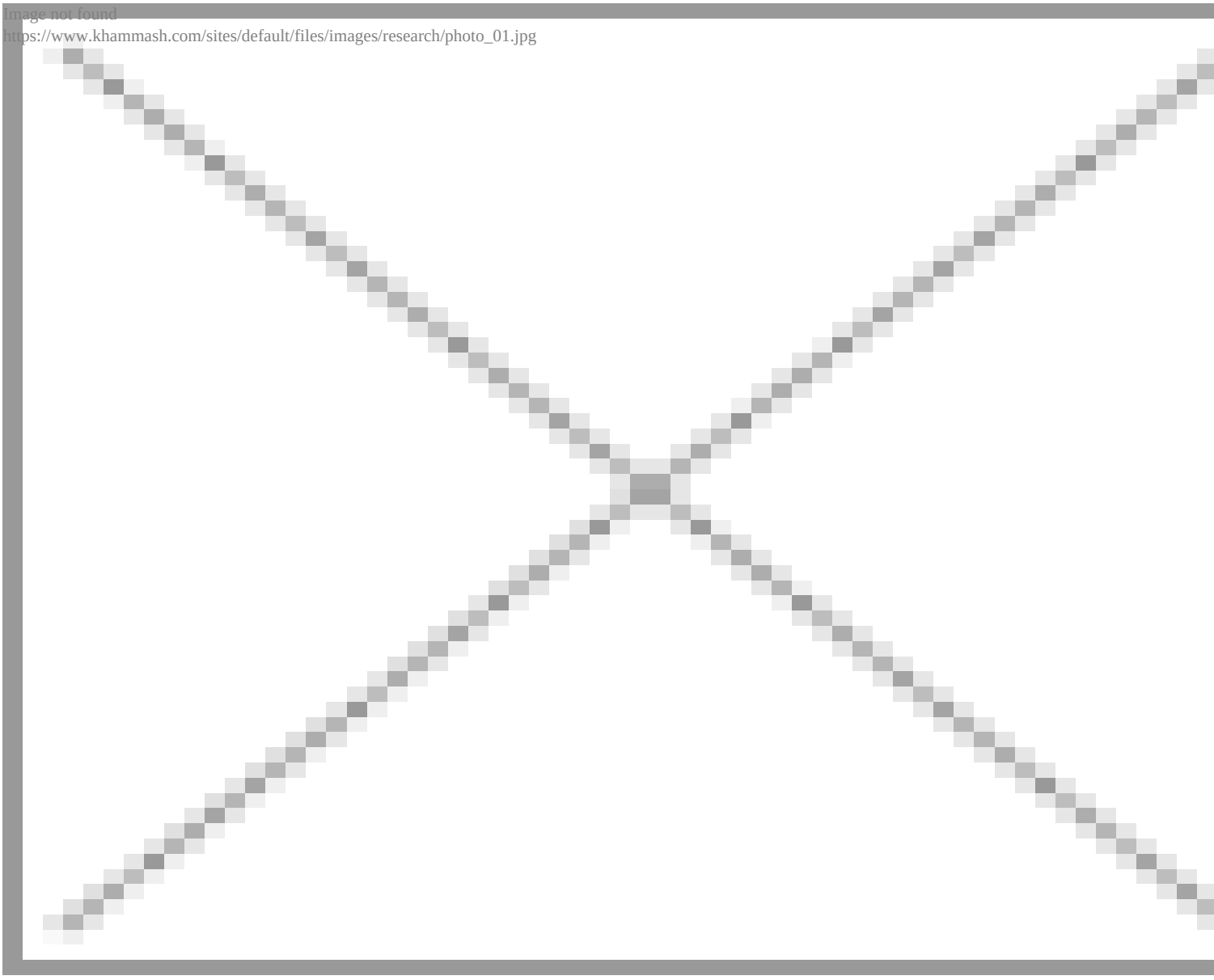
Published on *Khammash Architects* (https://www.khammash.com)

# Photogenic Autumn

By Ammar Khammash, The Jordan Times Weekender - October 2003

The sky pulls its dark clouds eastward, like a fragmentary thick blanket of black wool, worn out in many spots. The constant and sure movement of the traveling clouds drags a contact print of themselves on the earth below, another spotted blanket of shade and light, falling and climbing in deep grooves, and on rounded hills of a land that is desperate for the first drop of rain.




You are standing between two dramas, two stages, and the lightshow projected from heaven is picked up on the rugged earth, wrinkled and folded, and enriched with the challenge of forms that hide and reappear between colors of ink and fire.

Like spotlights following the action on a stage, an apocalyptic beam of light falling from a hole in the clouds, combs the wide vista below. In one instance it slips into the side of a valley that you can?t see, bouncing its warmth on the other side facing you, and making the whole valley appear as if lit by a flame

within. After a while the light beam climbs out of the valley and settles on the flat plateau above, picking up the redness of the plain, and adding a sharp brush stroke of the richest brick pigment.

It is said that the ruggedness of the land is reflected in the ruggedness of cloud forms above. The same is partially true with regard to colors. At a certain angle you can actually see, in the eastern desert, the color of the land picked up on the bottom of the clouds. This is more visible when the sunlight falls at an angle, illuminating the desert surface below a cloud, while the cloud?s shadow is falling in the same angle further to the east.

Autumn is all about focus and color. It is Jordan?s best season for photography because the atmosphere is clearest. The cooler air of this season cannot hold much humidity. There is also less dust in the atmosphere, especially after the first rains, when water cleanses most of the floating dust and fastens its fine particles onto the ground. One actually feels the sharpness of sun these days, as its rays pass through clearer air and come to us in maximum strength.

This clarity of the atmosphere often gives the effect of a zoom lens. The lack of haze makes distant landscapes look closer because our brains use haze as one of the main clues to detect remote distances. In fact the far end of a landscape is measured, mentally, by the loss of line-sharpness and color-contrast, both altered by the clarity of the atmosphere. In autumn distances are cut in half, visually, and we live and see Jordan with a different light-filter.

This is also the season of a different angle of sun. The change of the sun?s passage in the sky, from a high arc to a lower one, can be felt by the day. The lower sun illuminates the landscape at a sharper angle, elongating shadows and removing them further away from their objects. This helps to accentuate the three-dimensionality of land and its forms, it also elongates the good hours of photography to cover all of the shorter day.

When the sun reaches a different spot in our room, we feel the sunlight-calendar telling us that winter is approaching, it is a beautiful feeling, but it can also be maddening, as I feel anxious to be in so many remote spots of Jordan, all stunningly lit, and all waiting to be witnessed and recorded; this is the time of landscape photography.

*Build up your photo collection in autumn. This is the beginning of the best light for landscape photography, get the sky working for you, and all what you need is the right moment. Try to think of making photos without any specific subject, abstract or semi-abstract, where the light becomes your content, and an image becomes a questioning witness of a moment gone forever. Drive to the edges of the eastern desert, to the peripheries of Amman, or explore the slopes of the Jordan rift valley. When it gets very cold you can explore the floor of the Great Rift Valley, to the north of the Dead Sea or in Wadi Araba to the south. The landscape between Pella and the Ajloun heights has excellent spots, with a rich variety of textures and colors. Best photos can be taken when you visit these places alone, when you can concentrate and develop a contemplative mood, good for picking magical moments.*

---

Copyright (c) 2013 Khammash Architects. All rights reserved.

---

**Source URL:** https://www.khammash.com/research/photogenic-autumn