

Macro Maestro

Kurt Orionmystery – A Wildlife Photographer in His Own Words

Malaysia's impenetrable rainforests are not only home to iconic species such as orangutans and hornbills - and a local photographer with a keen eye for details has decided to discover their smaller wonders

My name is Hock Ping Guek but I am known as Kurt (orionmystery) to my real life photography friends and many more in some ten macro photography forums (and Facebook!) I actively post in. I live in Malaysia and have been shooting mainly macro and nature photography since July 2007. Macro has really opened up a whole new world for me. The more I get to know my macro subjects (mainly arthropods), the more I am in love with them. Invertebrates may be small, but they are the majority. Without them, our ecosystem will collapse in no time!

I bought my first camera, a film Point & Shoot, before I went on a 2-week trip to New Zealand, in January, 1996. Not too long after that, I upgraded to a film SLR. About ten years later, in 2007, while browsing some macro images in a few local forums, I found myself amazed by the details in the insect images that we

didn't get to see with our naked eyes. That really sparked my interest in macro. I bought my DSLR and a 1:1 macro lens in July 17, 2007, and started doing macro photography seriously since then. However, after about a year, I started yearning for more magnification and the Canon MP-E65 1X-5X macro lens seemed like a natural choice for me. I switched to Canon just because of this wonderful lens. I later also acquired the Canon MT-24EX Twin Flash to complete my macro rig. All my images here were shot with a Canon 40D, either with the MP-E65 and lit with the MT-24EX Twin Flash, or Sigma 150mm, with or without a 1.4x tele-converter, with natural light. I am not sure if I have what one would call a "personal style", but I always do my best to make my arthropod subjects look good, by giving them good light and by picking the best angles to shoot from. I could spend easily 30 to 60

minutes on one subject, even more if it's something rare. I love both full flash macro as well as natural light macro. I strongly urge that you try both if you haven't already done so! I always shoot in RAW and process my raw files in Adobe Camera Raw, paying special attention to White Balance. I prefer my nature images to look natural and not overly saturated nor too contrasty! I spend around 5 minutes per image in Adobe Camera Raw, and probably another 5 minutes in Photoshop on dust spot removal and some cloning/spot healing to remove whatever that doesn't add to the image. All in all, it shouldn't take more than 10 minutes per image unless there is focus stacking (to increase depth of field) involved. My advice to anybody interested in macro? 3 P's : Passion, Patience and Practice - that's what I always tell my workshop participants. ●

<http://orionmystery.blogspot.com>





Ogre Spider - *Dinopsis* sp.

Canon EOS 40D, 1/200, f/13, Flash, ISO 100,
MP-E65mm f/2.8 1-5x Macro

Face to face with an aptly-named Ogre-faced spider
(*Denoipidae* - *Dinopsis* sp.) at night, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.



Temple viper *Tropidolaemus subannulatus*

Canon EOS 40D, 1/200, f/14, Flash, ISO 100,
MP-E65mm f/2.8 1-5x Macro

Four inches away from the front of my MP-E65 macro lens
to a venomous pit viper (*Tropidolaemus subannulatus*),
Pahang, Malaysia.



Spider with prey

Canon EOS 40D, 1/200, f/11, Flash, ISO 100,
MP-E65mm f/2.8 1-5x Macro

An unidentified nursery web spider
with a Hymenopteran prey I found at night.
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Lynx spider with prey

Canon EOS 40D, 1/200, f/11,
natural light, ISO 100

MP-E65mm f/2.8 1-5x Macro

A Lynx spider (*Oxyopidae*) with a
big winged termite prey at night.

Petaling Jaya, Malaysia.



Bird dropping Crab spider

Canon EOS 40D, 1/20, f/16, natural
light, ISO 800, 210mm

A Bird dropping Crab spider (*Phrynarachne*
cf decipiens?) with a wasp prey, and an
opportunistic fly, Maliau Basin, Borneo.

Jumping spider

Canon EOS 40D, 1/200,
f/11, Flash, ISO 100,
MP-E65mm f/2.8 1-5x Macro
A *Portia* sp. jumping spider,
Pahang, Malaysia.





Camouflaged spider

Canon EOS 40D, 1/200, f/11, Flash, ISO 200

Lens: MP-E65mm f/2.8 1-5x Macro

An exquisitely camouflaged *Heurodes* sp.(?) spider. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.



Flower mantis

Canon EOS 40D, 1/10, f/11,
natural light, ISO 200, 150mm

A gorgeous *Theopropus elegans* Flower mantis,
threatened by a fearless little spider.
Danum Valley, Sabah, Malaysia (Borneo).



Anglehead Lizard

Canon EOS 40D, 1 sec,
f/4,5, natural light, ISO
200, 150mm

A handsome male
Anglehead lizard
Gonocephalus grandis
on a tree trunk. Selangor
State Park, Malaysia.

Longhorn beetle

Canon EOS 40D, 1/200,
f/11, Flash, ISO 200,
MP-E65mm f/2.8 1-5x Macro

Portrait of an unidentified
longhorn beetle
from a highland in Pahang,
Malaysia.





Ant-mimic Crab spider

Canon EOS 40D, 1/200,
f/11, Flash, ISO 200

MP-E65mm f/2.8 1-5x Macro
A male Ant-mimic Crab spider
Amyciaea lineatipes with a
weaver ant prey. Kuala
Lumpur, Malaysia.

Crab spider

Canon EOS 40D, 1/200, f/11, Flash, ISO 100

MP-E65mm f/2.8 1-5x Macro

An orange Crab spider (*Thomisidae*)
on a purple wildflower.



Robber Fly with prey

Canon EOS 40D, 1/200, f/14, Flash, ISO 100

MP-E65mm f/2.8 1-5x Macro

A golden robber fly *Laphria sobria*
with beetle prey, Pahang, Malaysia.

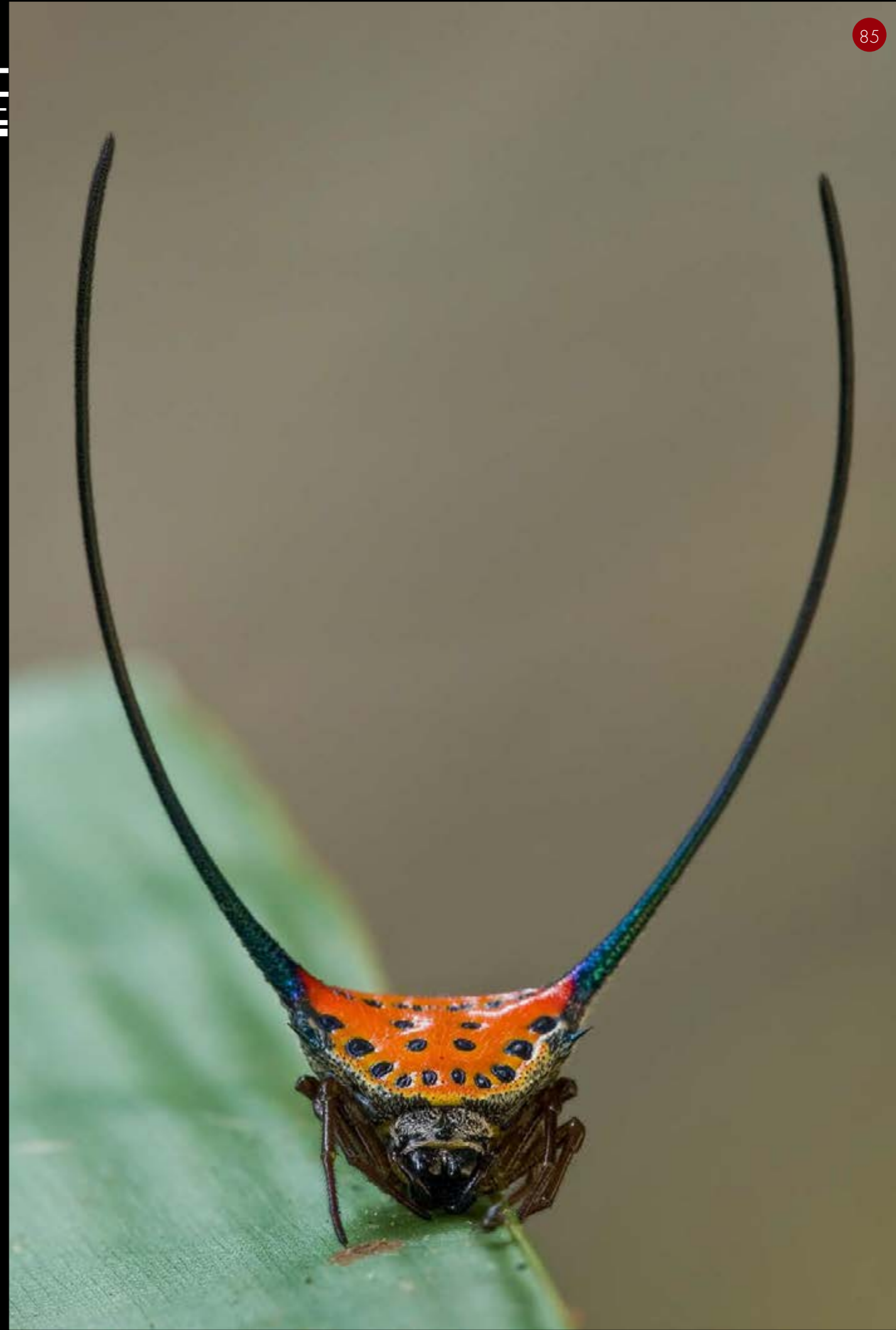
Spiny Orb Weaver

Canon EOS 40D, 1/4 sec, f/11,
natural light, ISO 100, 150mm
A beautiful Spiny Orb Weaver
Macracantha arcuata,
Selangor State Park, Malaysia.



Lacewing

Canon EOS 40D, 1/200, f/13, Flash, ISO 200
MP-E65mm f/2.8 1-5x Macro
A gorgeous new species of lacewing (*Semachrysa jade*)
I found in Selangor State Park, Malaysia.



Huntsman spider

Canon EOS 40D, 1/200, f/13, Flash, ISO 100
MP-E65mm f/2.8 1-5x Macro

A Malaysian Black and Gold Huntsman (*Thelcticopis* sp., family *Sparassidae*, Tube-dwelling spiders) and a daredevil yellow crazy ant! Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.



Bird dropping spider pair

Canon EOS 40D, 1/200, f/13, Flash, ISO 100,
MP-E65mm f/2.8 1-5x Macro

A female Bird dropping spider *Cyrtarachne fangchen-
gensis* and a really small male of the same species.
Petaling Jaya, Malaysia.



Longhorn beetle with mites

Canon EOS 40D, 1/200, f/13, Flash, ISO 100, MP-E65mm f/2.8 1-5x Macro
Face to face with a longhorn beetle *Batocera thomsoni* with mites on its forehead. Highland in Pahang, Malaysia.

Spitting spider with spiderlings

Canon EOS 40D, 1/200, f/11, Flash, ISO 100, MP-E65mm f/2.8 1-5x Macro
Face to face with a Spitting spider (*Scytodes* sp., probably *S. velutina*) with her spiderlings. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

