



PRO CAM 2: The DSLR Camera Hidden Inside Your Phone!

By Vince Boisgard

Every week I scout the app store in search of new treasures. On one such search, I came across ProCam 2 offered as the app of the week. While reading the description detailing all the settings and possibilities, I was really tempted to download the app and since it was free for a limited time, I could not resist the temptation... I had to press download and get it!

So there I was with this new app hanging on my screen, I opened it and went through the entire selection of settings and configurations. I almost got lost in it!

The app is a replacement camera for iPhone and iPad, it is much more advanced than the build-in camera of your device allowing you to work with your phone as if you were holding in your hands a small professional tool. ProCam does not allow any editing, it is all happens during the capture of the image.

You can certainly find a few other apps similar to ProCam on the market and to be honest the competition is quite good, so what makes ProCam better than the others?

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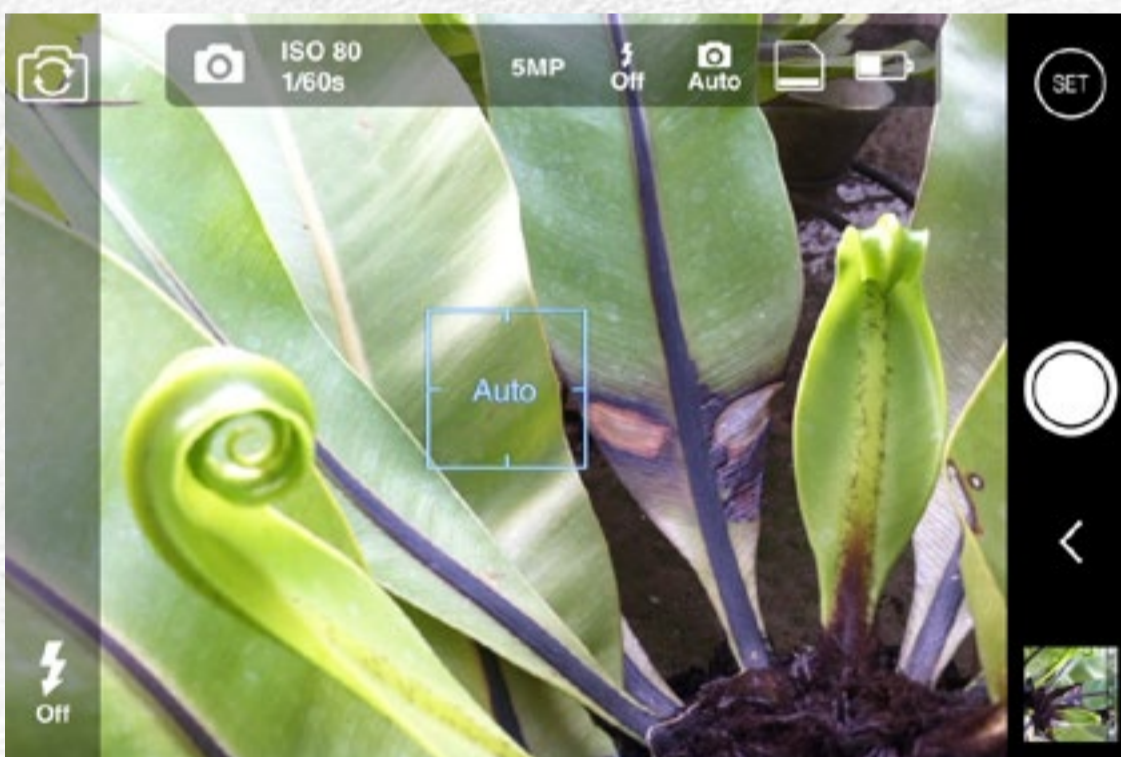
Well I think it's mainly a question of preferences and comfort of use: I like the functionality of the app and its design, I personally find it as intuitive as one of my other digital cameras. It does not offer any post production editing but to me that is a sign of good quality: some apps can do everything but the question is do they do it well?

Let's talk about ProCam a little more and go deep in it.



On the main screen is direct access to the flash, the front/back cameras, a "SET" button and a little arrow giving you access to different capture settings.

An info bar is also available giving the ISO and the exposure time, resolution, mode, storage space and battery info.

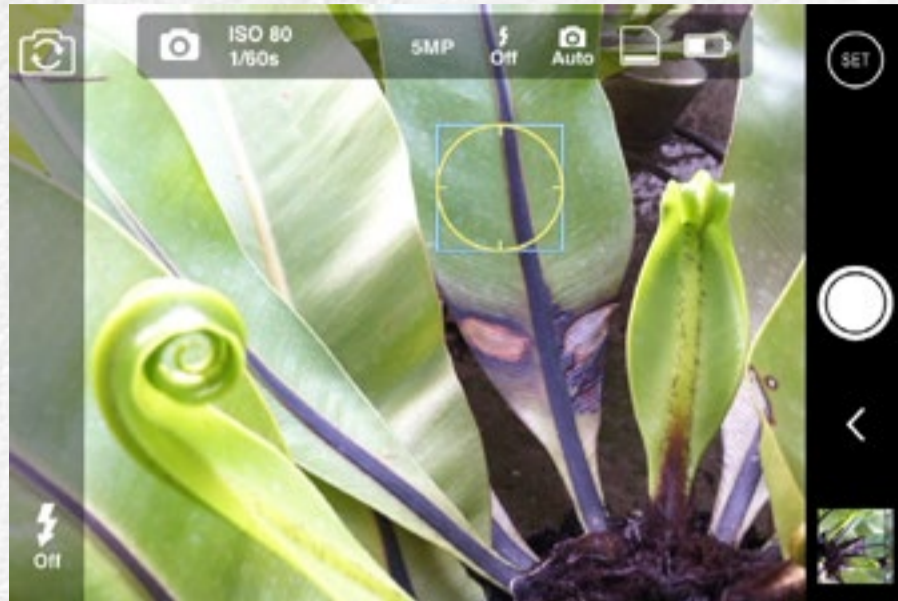


Double tap anywhere on the screen to activate the auto focus and a exposure which is systematically taken in the middle of the screen.

You can also tap on a specific part to choose the focusing area and its exposure setting then press the capture button. Shoot, it's in the box!

So far you might think it's a little bit classic but I'm only getting started here...

Tap the screen and the image will focus on the subject you selected showing a blue square with a yellow circle inside of it.



Notice the WB (white balance) icon appearing on the screen letting you customise it yourself.

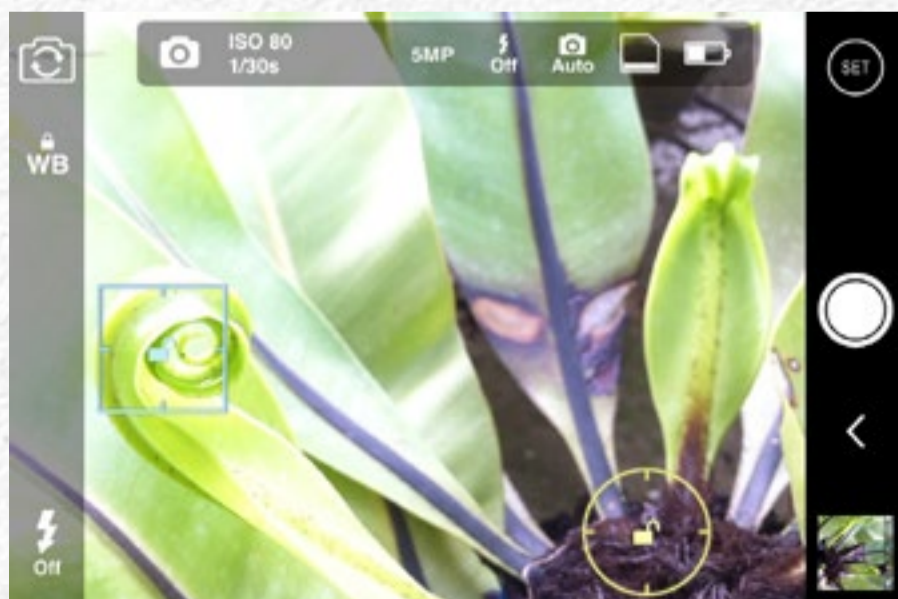


It is possible to lock both so you can move your camera around keeping the same focusing and exposure, ideal for the low/highlight scenes such as concerts.

Pressing the arrow (under the capture button) will open the capture settings where you can choose between different alignment grids, the format of your image, the resolution and the different modes available - very similar to settings you can find on a compact camera:

Big button (touch the screen to capture); Face detection (detect the face and focus on it with a possibility to activate the auto capture when the face is detected); Sound snap (capture to a clapping sound ideal for group/ family pictures); Interval (capture images at selected interval); Burst mode;

Once focused, you can move the yellow circle (which determines the exposure) anywhere out of the blue square allowing the focusing in one place and the exposure in another. This is ideal if you want play with the depth of field.



Anti-shake (the image will be captured only when there is no movement); Night mode (long exposure for low light scenes); Single shot; Video; Time lapse.

Pressing the "SET" button opens a setting panel with different sub-menus for photo and video where you can activate or deactivate multiple functions such as: Geotagging/ date, time, location and copyright stamp/ Format; TIFF or JPEG/ Self timer and interval time delay/ Quick launch notification/ languages and much more.

Unfortunately, I'm equipped with an iPhone 4 and some of the features such as exposure compensation, manual ISO, shutter speed, manual focusing and white balance, live filters and lenses are accessible only with iPhone 4s and upward. I must say I'm disappointed... I haven't upgraded yet!

One of the things that really catches my attention in the settings menu is that you can select between JPEG and TIFF file formats. I must say it's a big advantage to be able to save the file in a TIFF format since the loss of quality is much less than with JPEG, especially if you intend to work on the photo later using editing software.



What does it do out in the field?

Here I've covered many of the main features of ProCam and as you can probably gather, I've been seduced. But what does it do out in the field? For this, I had to take it for a test drive and push it a little to find out how it performs.

While on a short stay in Bangkok, I hung out in the city with my iPhone in my pocket, ready for the ProCam experience. I sure wanted to try everything but I also thought since many other apps are offering some of the ProCam settings, I essentially focused on the points I've been disappointed with in the past.

How long have I been looking for a photo app built to capture images with a long exposure time? Well I've tried a few, maybe almost all of the free ones and every single time I've had to delete the app because I wasn't happy with it. Honestly, I wasn't expecting much from the ProCam night mode until I started using it. The night mode has a selection of 4 different time exposures from 1s to 1/8s and the results are truly fantastic.



It won't allow you to take a shot of the Milky Way but it's enough to capture any cityscape after sunset, playing with lights. As your photograph might have a second long exposure time, the phone needs to be placed in a stable position to avoid any blurry shots. There is a timer to solve the shaky capture problems that can be set from a 1 second delay to 60 seconds. Place the camera on a support, run the timer and come back home with some really cool shots. How is that!



Siam BTS station Bangkok Thailand.



*TUK-TUK waiting for customers,
Chinatown Bangkok Thailand.*



When I was starting in photography I was told by a professional photographer: "To find out if a camera is good or not, you have to try taking a bad photo on purpose! If it works, you will be able to take good pictures without knowing how to use it within your mind and thinking of ways to be creative.

If the camera is always correcting the settings in order to render the picture so it is not blurry but usable, then you will take good pictures but more likely to forget about being creative and playing with light effects".

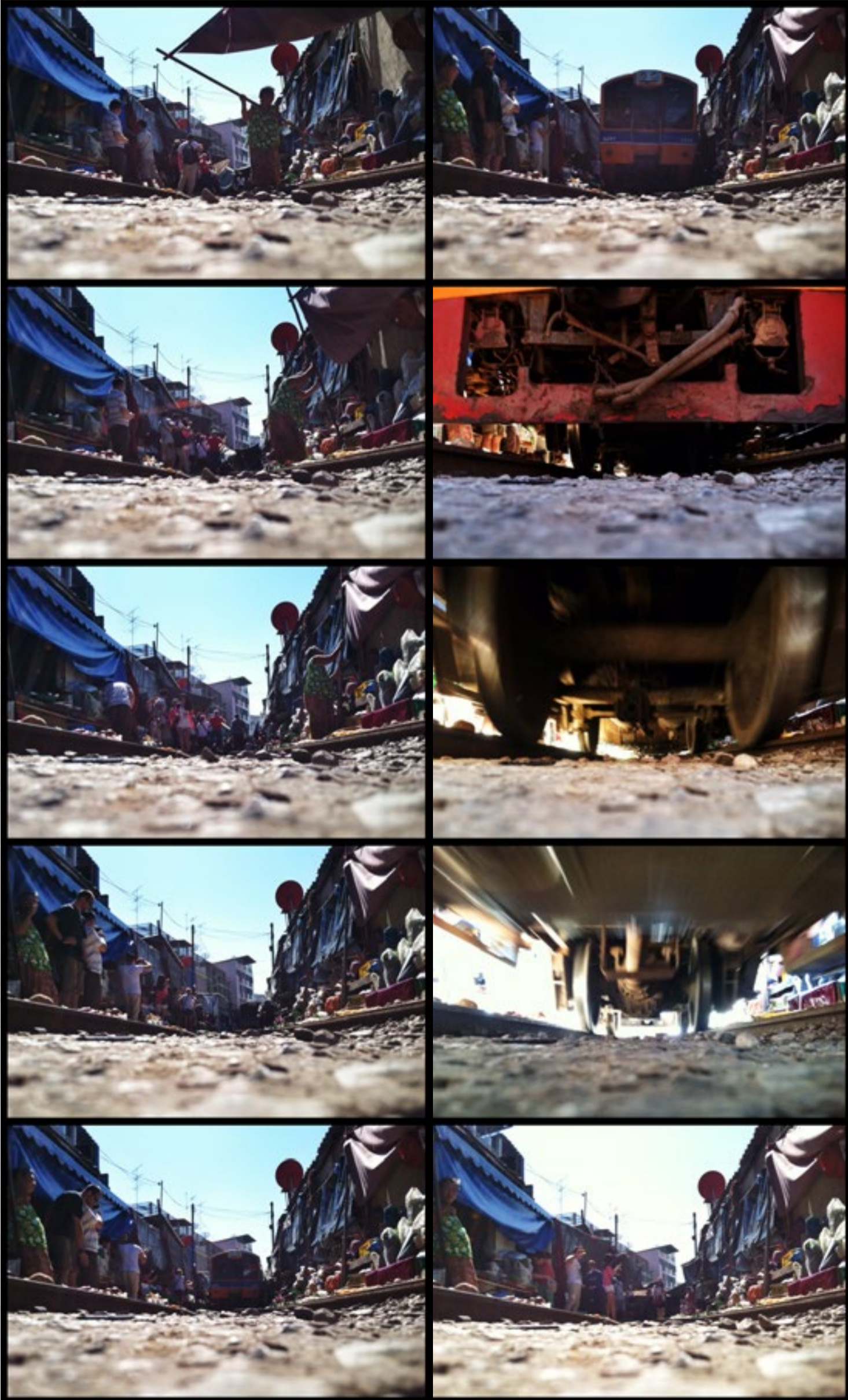
So I tried taking "bad pictures" with ProCam and I loved it:





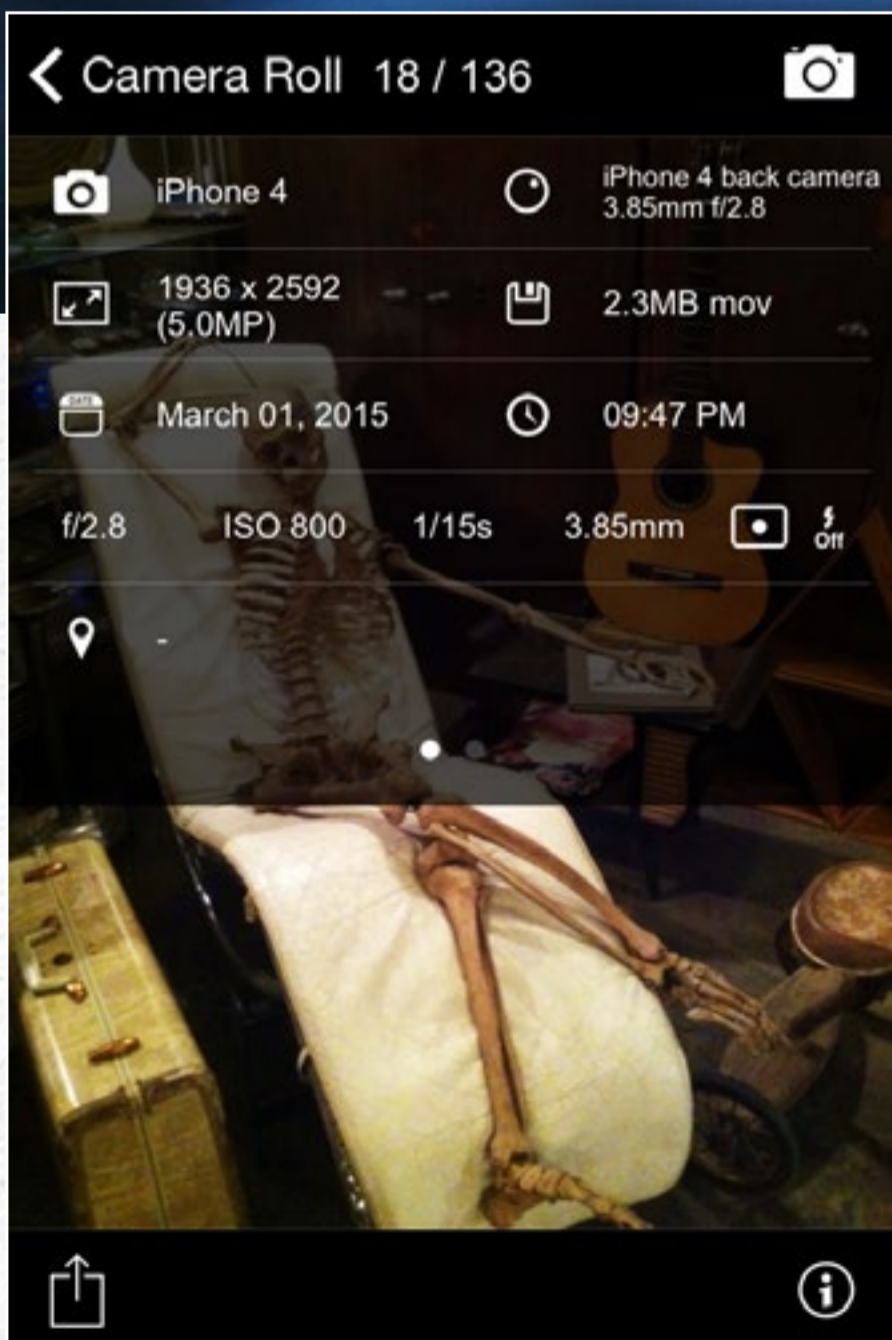
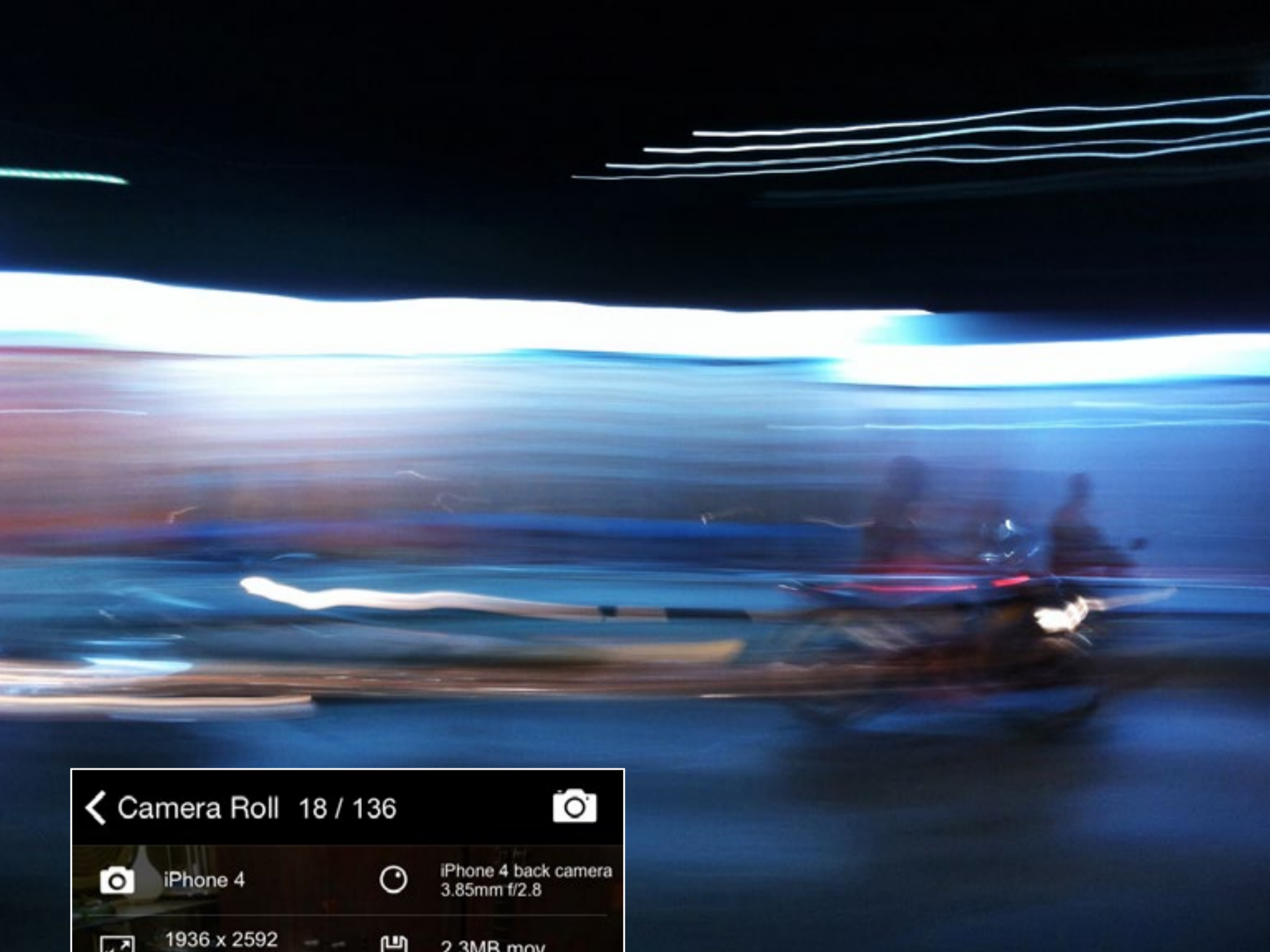
The anti shake mode is ideal if you want to ensure there will be no blurry movement in the picture. Pressing the capture button will launch the shot but the image will only be captured when the camera detects a stable state without any movement. Don't confuse the setting with an image stabilizer but know that it will be useful for capturing a landscape after sunset, making sure your shot isn't blurred.





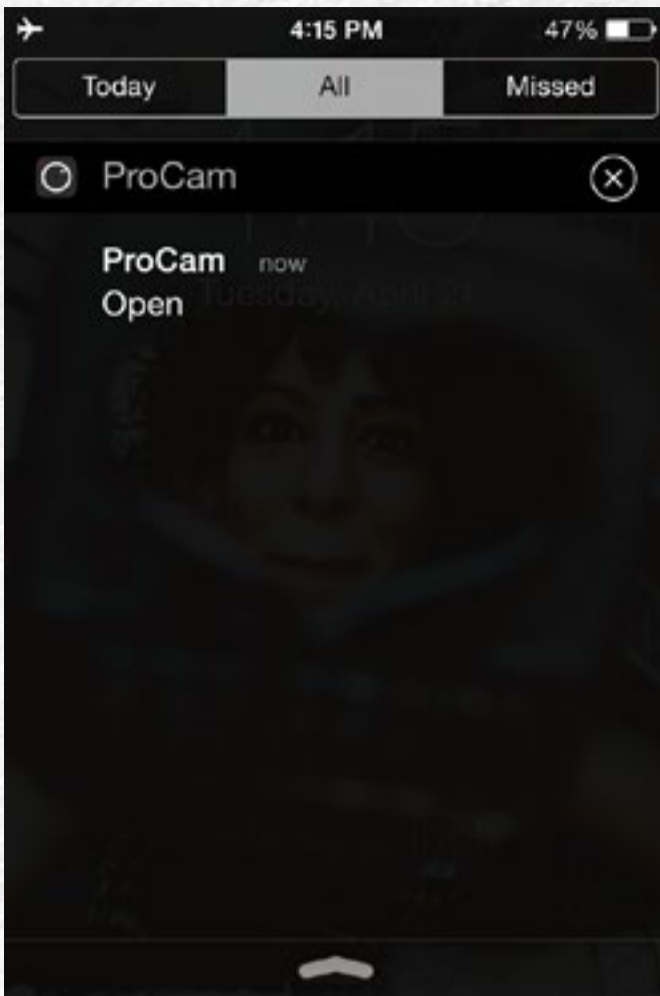
While at the railway market, I used the interval timer to shoot a train passing by. The interval photo mode is a good way to capture an angle not accessible in any normal situation. Be creative! Don't be shy this is the perfect mode to get photos offering an interesting point of view.

Select the interval between the photos from 1 second up to 60 seconds, choose the focusing area; exposure and let the phone do the rest while you enjoy the scenery around you instead of viewing it through the screen thus missing out on what's happening around.



You can access your camera roll via the app and view the EXIF info, more commonly called metadata, which gives information such as the type of camera, date, resolution, image size, exposure details and location.

The video mode allows you to create films selecting the resolution and the number of frames per second. Once the recording is started, you can pause the video at anytime. Change your angle then continue recording on the same film. You are also able to capture images without stopping the video. Amazing and very smart! You never know what's going to happen while filming and these are always good options to have at hand.



The last point I want to talk about is the option of turning on the quick launch notification. I've personally never seen this before. The norm is to go through my screens, find the app, launch it. Now with ProCam 2, you can set up a quick launch notification for every minute up to every 60 mins. From there, no matter what are you doing on your phone, a ProCam notification is going to pop up in your notification bar. Click on it and the app will open itself ready to be used. If your screen is locked, there is no way to access the app without the pin code (security first) but you will see the notification, tap on it, insert your passcode and there you are already in the app! Such a little thing but again, it is so practical to be able to access the app so fast when you need it.

It's been fun using the app and it will be in the future because this one's a keeper. I found in ProCam 2 what I've been waiting for, for a long time. An app that gives me the power of changing my phone into a proper camera!

I almost forgot I could text or make a phone call using my camera.. err, phone, I mean my phone! Thumbs up to the ProCam team that created this magnificent app! So far, it is the most complete photo app on the market and it was about time someone did it. Nothing is for free, but trust me it is worth the money spent: \$2.99 for a limited time (40% discounted) and even if I must say my iPhone 4 is a little too old to run the app at its best, it is cheaper than buying a camera and it does a great job. And most importantly, remember we are talking about mobile phones and apps here and in the end it's not the camera that makes the photograph!

Download ProCam 2

ProCam 2 is available on the app store. [Download it here](#)

About the Author

Vincent Boisgard is a French photographer who, in 2010, bought a one way plane ticket with the intention of exploring the world. Five years later he has visited 11 countries including Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri-Lanka and India.

In 2013 he was listed in the top 20 travel photographers by the "Professional photographer of the year" magazine and later in 2014, was featured as part of the 50 best shots of 2014 selection of the EyeEm community.

Find out more about Vince and travels in [issue 16 of Mobiography](#) or you can follow his work on [Eyeem](#) and [Behance.net](#)

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