



the color of mommy

LANTING'S CHICK SCENE

Is it real or is it digital? That's the question begged by **Frans Lanting's** study of an emperor penguin searching for its offspring, which appeared in the March issue of *National Geographic*. The answer, astonishingly, is that the contrast of brightly colored parent and monochrome young is unmanipulated. Even the seeming difference in their sharpness is all natural—an illusion created by fuzzy chick down.

You wouldn't expect any visual subterfuge from the straight-shooting Lanting, who spent a month camped on

Antarctic sea ice for his essay on the world's most intrepid birds. "The problem wasn't just minus-40-degree cold," he says. "To get close enough to the penguins for a wide-angle view like this, you have to behave like a penguin yourself, just standing and shuffling around for hours on end. And standing still isn't exactly the best way to stay warm." Indeed, Lanting's insistence on unusual perspectives—this shot was made from an elevated platform he slowly inched into the winter colony—cost him the feeling in his fingertips for several months.

"Even by my standards, this was an extreme undertaking," says Lanting, whose reputation in Japan earned the project supplemental backing from Japanese television. "But penguins are remarkable animals subsisting in an exquisite part of the world, so it was a real privilege to work there."

● *Lanting shot with a lithium-powered Nikon N90S and 20-35mm f/2.8 AF Zoom-Nikkor set to 28mm; exposure was 1/30 second at f/8.5, handheld, on Fujichrome Velvia pushed one stop.*