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KEY CONCEPTS
These icons at the beginning of columns indicate there's a short video on a tool or function used in that tutorial at the Key Concepts KelbyOne member webpage at http://kelbyone.com/keyconcepts.

Dodge & Burn tools   Lasso tool   Layer masks

Pen tool   Smart objects   Quick Selection tool

DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT
Whenever you see this symbol at the end of an article, it means there are either downloadable practice files or additional content for KelbyOne members at http://kelbyone.com/magazine.

Sylights   All lighting diagrams courtesy of Sylights

Click this symbol in the magazine to return to the Table of Contents.

From the Editor
great things coming in 2015

As we're headed into the new year, I want to make sure you get the most from this magazine and your KelbyOne membership in 2015. So what's coming in 2015? A whole lot more of everything! It sounds like I'm joking, but that's the plan.

Our goal has always been to release one full-length class for our members every Thursday. That's 52 classes a year. As we close out 2014, we're on pace to deliver almost double that. That's an insane amount of classes. Next year, we're looking at new features being added to Photoshop on a regular basis through the Creative Cloud, and if Adobe updates Lightroom, we'll be the first with classes on it and with full coverage here in the magazine.

Of course, a lot of our members are photographers and we're going to crush it for them with lots of new classes on both ends of the experience spectrum, which means more new classes for beginners on everything from photography to Lightroom and more advanced classes with some amazing new instructors being added to the lineup this year, as well.

Two of the most underutilized benefits for our members are tech support for Photoshop, Lightroom, and photography and the awesome discounts we've negotiated on all sorts of products and services exclusively for members. The members who use these two services absolutely rave about them, but I don't think nearly enough members take advantage of either.

The tech support alone is pretty unique in our industry. Think about it. You're working on a Photoshop project or you're working in Lightroom and you have a troubleshooting problem, or maybe you don't know how to create a specific effect or look. Maybe your camera's acting up. Whatever it is, we have private, one-on-one, direct tech support to help you through it fast, and that's something we're really proud of.

As for the discounts, we've built up a huge collection of companies that offer our members exclusive deals, and we hear from members all the time who pay for their memberships with the discounts alone. We even have some discounts that fly under the radar, such as our discount Apple Store, created for us by Apple themselves. I saved more than $200 on my laptop versus the regular Apple Store price, so it's a pretty sweet benefit. Give both of those a try and it will add even more value to your membership.

The brand-new KelbyOne member site looks really nice. The reason for the new site is that we wanted to implement a massive technology update under the hood, and it started with a new enterprise-level video player that delivers a better video experience all around. Beyond that, we were able to bring one of the features we've wanted to add for a long time: closed captioning. We also snuck another great feature in that I think you'll love: searchable transcripts. You can search every word said in every class, so if there's a particular technique you need to search for, you can pinpoint exactly where it is, and that's a huge time saver.

We always want to make the site easier to navigate and more functional. Nobody has time to go digging around struggling to find out what they want. It's about getting them to the training they're looking for fast, and we've made great strides in this area. Look for lots more improvements and a better Web experience all around. I've seen some of the things we're working on, and it's some pretty smart stuff that I can't wait to share.

Finally, we released the KelbyOne app for Android users (yay!) and we added a feature to the iOS version: the ability to take up to three classes offline so you can watch classes any place where you don't have access to the Internet.

I'm sure you've heard that Matt Kloskowski joined onOne Software, but we still have a great relationship and we'll be working with him going forward. While I won't see him every day in the office, you'll still have the opportunity to learn from him at KelbyOne in 2015.

Here in the magazine, you'll see more of the tutorials and articles you've told us you wanted (thanks for everybody who took our survey). Our goal is to make sure that nobody knows more about Photoshop and Lightroom than you. It's going to be an awesome year, and I'm so glad to have you with us on this journey.

Here's wishing you a 2015 filled with health, happiness, and prosperity.

All my best,

Scott Kelby
KelbyOne President & CEO
Editor & Publisher, *Photoshop User*

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creates photographs for clients such as Westin Hotels, AT&T, and Coca-Cola. He has authored four books, including a *Dummies* book, and his photos have appeared in *Time, Newsweek,* and *The Wall Street Journal.* Visit **kevinamesphotography.com**.

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JAY NELSON
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ROB SYLVAN
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SCOTT VALENTINE
is an Adobe Community Professional and Photoshop author. His latest book is *The Hidden Power of Adjustment Layers* (Adobe Press). Keep up with him at **scoxel.com**.

ERIK VALIND
is a New York City-based commercial photographer who shares his knowledge in various publications, as an author, online as a KelbyOne instructor, as well as through workshops and seminars across the country. Visit **www.ErikValind.com**.

ERIK VLIETINCK
founded IT Enquirer in 1999 (**http://it-enquirer.com**). A J.D. by education, Erik has been a freelance technology editor for more than 20 years. He has written for *Macworld, Computer Arts, Windows NT Magazine,* and many others.

JAKE WIDMAN
is a writer and editor who lives in San Francisco. He's been covering the intersection of computers and graphic design for about 25 years now—since back when it was called "desktop publishing" and Photoshop was just a piece of scanning software.

Photoshop User Magazine

Photoshop User magazine is the official publication of KelbyOne. It is for members and is not available to the public by subscription.

As a KelbyOne member, you automatically receive *Photoshop User* delivered right to your door (or digitally) ten times a year. Each issue features in-depth Photoshop, Lightroom, and photography tutorials written by the most talented designers, photographers, and leading authors in the industry.

About KelbyOne ▾

KELBYONE

is the world's leading resource for Adobe® Photoshop®, Lightroom®, and photography training, news, and education. Founded in 1998 as the National Association of Photoshop Professionals (NAPP), KelbyOne has evolved from NAPP and KelbyTraining to create a singular hub for creative people to learn, grow, and inspire. From photographers to graphic designers, beginners to professionals, KelbyOne is open to everyone.

There's no faster, easier, and more affordable way to get really good at Photoshop and photography. You can join for only $25 per month or $249 U.S. for a full year of training. To learn more, visit **www.kelbyone.com**.

MEMBER DISCOUNTS

Save anywhere from 2–4 times your membership cost by using our many industry-related discounts.

TECH SUPPORT

Fast, friendly Photoshop, Lightroom, and photo gear help; equipment advice; and more from certified experts.

MEMBER COMMUNITY

KelbyOne members range from beginners to pros and love to lend each other a hand. Together, we have built the friendliest, most knowledgeable Photoshop and photography community on the Web.

NEWS & REVIEWS

Unbiased coverage on the latest equipment, plug-ins, and programs in the marketplace.

WEEKLY E-NEWSLETTER

The KelbyOne Insider is your weekly connection to everything KelbyOne. It's produced exclusively for members to keep you informed of everything new in the industry and at KelbyOne headquarters.

REGISTRATION DISCOUNT TO PHOTOSHOP WORLD CONFERENCE & EXPO

The annual KelbyOne convention and the largest Photoshop and photography learning experience on the planet. It's an amazing event.

Member Benefits ▾

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Ten issues of the best Photoshop tutorial-based magazine in the industry.

MEMBERS-ONLY WEBSITE

Our extensive website features time- and money-saving content.

ONLINE CLASSES & EDUCATION

Thousands of Photoshop and photography tutorials, full online classes, and quick-tip videos.

FIND KELBYONE MEMBERSHIP DETAILS AT   or call 800-738-8513 Monday–Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. EST.

KelbyOne Community

An Epic African Safari
coming to a kelbyone class soon

A Moose and a videographer embark on an African safari.... Yeah, there's no punch line here, except the entertaining and ridiculously cool batch of selfies we received from our very own video director, Adam Rohrmann, after his epic safari with Moose Peterson. While selfies with the critters was an extracurricular assignment and an added bonus for our entertainment, Moose and Adam were on a serious mission to create one kick-butt KelbyOne class.

Our objective is always to bring our members as close to the action as possible, so we knew this adventure would turn into much more than just another class. This unforgettable journey allowed these two passionate creatives to see Africa in a spectacular way and create something much more than a class on wildlife or travel photography. While Africa is rich in wildlife diversity, it's also in grave danger. The extremely high risks of extinction and poaching added more meaning to every picture they captured, to the point where all EXIF data is scrubbed from every photo taken of a rhino.

Adam gained a life-changing perspective from knowledgeable rangers who provided a ton of valuable information on the animals and their habits. This knowledge was key to helping create a story in this class, to give that extra meaning to every piece of footage Adam and Moose captured. Right down to Adam dropping his camera to seek safety before being run down by three rhinos (don't worry, no one was harmed in the making of this class).

This adventure put Adam and Moose in close and personal (and dangerous!) situations with the wildlife, which is sure to provide tons of amazing teachable moments. Based on the stories and behind-the-scenes images we've seen so far, this is a class you won't want to miss. Get a sneak peek of the adventure on Moose's blog at **Moosepeterson.com**, including Adam's infamous selfies. Be sure to keep an eye out for this class coming soon in 2015.

Adam Rohrmann

Correction

In the December issue of *Photoshop User* magazine, we included group photos from Scott Kelby's 7th Annual Worldwide Photo Walk on page 14. In our haste to ship that issue off to press, we inadvertently left off the photo credits for those images. Our apologies to Andy McSweeney (left) and Mohamed Mekhamer (right). To see more of Andy and Mohamed's work, check out the opposite page and then visit their websites.

Andy McSweeney
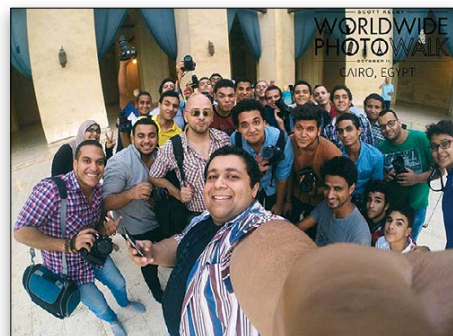
Mohamed Mekhamer

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT ›, › ANDY McSWEENEY AS PHOTO TOUR BRUGGE
MEMBER SINCE 2014 | MAIN IMAGE FOR PHOTO TOUR BRUGGE
WWW.PHOTOTOURBRUGGE.COM

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT ›, › MOHAMED MEKHAMER
MEMBER SINCE 2013 | EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION OF 2011: FIRST PLACE IN NIKON I AM A MOVEMENT PHOTO CONTEST
WWW.MEKHAMER.COM

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT ›, › KEVIN GRAHAM
MEMBER SINCE 2009 | **WWW.DSWFOTO.COM**

ARTIST SPOTLIGHT ›, › JIM ORME
MEMBER SINCE 2013 | HTTP://JANDKIMAGES.PHOTOSHELTER.COM

KelbyOne:
a look at 2014

Where did 2014 go? While it may have gone fast, we certainly experienced some exciting events, changes, and creative moments that made this past year one of our best yet to be a member. Let's take a short trip down not-so-distant memory lane at a few of our highlights here in the KelbyOne community.

NAPP + KelbyTraining = KelbyOne

Perhaps the biggest and most exciting news to come out of 2014 was the joining of forces between NAPP and KelbyTraining. Joining forces to create a singular resource, KelbyOne gave members even more amazing benefits than ever before. The combined catalog of classes has made our online training limitless, and our already strong communities grow even stronger with inspiration.

Brand Spankin' New Website

In October 2014, we launched a fresh, new website that makes navigating your online training resource a breeze. We added features like a better video player to enhance your training, a smoother checkout when making those must-have purchases, and, of course, a facelift that's easier on the eyes.

New Classes Released Every Week

We take pride in making sure we push out quality content that's current and covers the topics you want to learn. In 2014, we released more than 80 new classes from the industry's leading experts. That's nearly two classes a week for your give-me-more-coffee cram sessions.

KelbyOne World Tour

Okay, maybe it wasn't quite a world tour, but Scott did jump across the pond to visit our friends over in the U.K. for his "Shoot Like a Pro Seminar Tour." Plus, we held more than 51 one-day training seminars in the U.S., with nearly 12,000 eager, creative, photography-loving attendees.

We Be Bloggin'

We created a KelbyOne blog (**www.kelbyone.com/blog**) to up our cool points with the cyber hipsters, but also to deliver the very latest trends in Photoshop, Lightroom, photography, design, and video. It's packed with tons of great articles, tutorials, and news from our instructors and other industry insiders.

Photoshop User Redesign

This one is just checking to see if you're paying attention. If you still have that sparkle in your eye for your favorite Photoshop magazine, then surely you noticed a little redesign to incorporate our new KelbyOne branding, plus some extra design elements brought over from our *Light It* and *Lightroom* apps for added enhancement.

That's just a snippet of cool stuff we saw during another year that flew right past us. We have even more in store for 2015, so ready those cameras because we're sure to be in for another picture-perfect ride! (You can read more about what's in store for 2015 in Scott Kelby's "From the Editor" on page 6.)

Fresh New Classes
released at **kelbyone.com**

Photoshop In-Depth: Lighting Effects

The Lighting Effects filter is an incredibly powerful filter that can be used for relighting an existing photograph in myriad creative ways. From the basics of the interface to workflow tips and tricks to advanced projects like changing day to night, Pete Collins shows you everything you need to know about Lighting Effects to start using it in your next project.

Photoshop In-Depth: Cropping and Resolution

Image cropping and resolution are two of the most commonly misunderstood aspects of a digital imaging workflow. Join Pete Collins as he explains the principles you need to understand when cropping, resizing, and preparing your images for output so you can maintain the highest image quality possible for any job that comes your way.

Creative Speed Lighting for Fashion, Glamour, and Beauty

Join the amazingly talented Lou Freeman as she shares the wisdom gained from three decades worth of fashion, glamour, and beauty photography to show you how creative you can get with flashes on location and in the studio.

DSLR Filmmaking: 25 Tips in Premiere Pro

If you have a firm foundation for editing with Premiere Pro, then it's time to up your game. Brandon Ford's 25 tips, tricks, and hints are designed to make your editing workflow smoother, faster, and more efficient. He covers all of the little tricks of the trade that can add up to a huge savings in time when editing a big project.

Who's Who
in the kelbyone community

Meet Susan L. DeLuca, long-time member, senior executive turned photographer, and recent Image of the Week pick from Pete Collins. Her whimsical *Fairy by the Water* image wings its way into our hearts with its perfectly executed magical and mystical theme. Let's take a look inside what keeps Susan's creative fire burning.

Susan L. DeLuca

Spread the
good word

Teaching is our passion. It's in everything we do. And hearing your success validates the very reason why we're here. So preach on about the good word. We're all ears.

"@ScottKelby @kelbyone By the way, your *Photo Recipes* book is superb! I've already learned a lot and will be buying rest of the series soon!"—@MochrumDunbar

"KelbyOne has really upped their game with all the great in-depth training videos."—Steve H.

"*Photoshop User* is my go-to magazine for information. Love it!"—Marilyn M. ■

Tell us a little about the work that went into *Fairy by the Water*.

Everything is done in Photoshop. I make sure the lighting has a lot of contrast, use actions from Chasing Light, and then hand touch-up in Photoshop. Each one of my pictures takes me 12–15 hours at a minimum to complete. My most recent picture, *Walk in Mystery*, actually took me close to 30 hours to complete.

How has KelbyOne helped keep your training moving forward?

I have been to your conferences, studied online using your classes, and have numerous books you have published. Kelby-One has been my greatest source of nonuniversity information and education.

What's one of the most helpful tips or lessons you've received?

"Your lighting is terrible!" I admit I still need more experience in this area, but I'm getting better.

If you could pick anyone (living or dead) to be your mentor, who would it be?

Mathew Brady, Civil War photographer.

Time travel is possible and you can photograph any event. Name it.

I would have loved to photograph out west at the time of the settlers and be able to use the style of photography (with Photoshop, of course) that I use now.

You have the winning lotto numbers in hand, what's your first purchase?

If I actually did win the lottery, I would use every penny to build a photography school, gallery, and studio that could be shared with the community and local schools, which has been a dream of mine.

Keep those dreams alive, Susan. We're diggin' it! Check out more of Susan's work at **www.bloomingdalephotography.com**.

Exp⊙sed: Industry News

› › **The latest news about photography gear, software, and services**
BY MIKE MACKENZIE AND CHRIS MAIN

Westcott Releases
new softbox, reflector, and inverter

Westcott (**www.fjwestcott.com**) recently introduced the 32" Rapid Box Octa Duo, an ultraportable softbox that allows photographers to mount up to two hot-shoe flashes. It features a highly reflective silver interior, umbrella-style frame, lightweight construction, and it comes with a travel case. The built-in solid metal mounting and tilting bracket is fully adjustable and accommodates even the largest flashes. An adjustable collar prevents light spill while still allowing access to flash controls. An optional deflector plate and grids are available. It's available now for $269.90.

The 38x45" Omega Reflector is a 10-in-1 shoot-through reflector that also functions as a beauty dish and ring flash. It produces a main light and backlight with a single light source while keeping the reflector out of the frame. The Omega Reflector features a one-stop diffusion panel with an interchangeable white, silver, sunlight, and black cover. It has a double-riveted square frame for easy mounting, and also includes suction cups to mount it to glass surfaces. A travel bag is also included. The Omega Reflector costs $99.90.

The Encore Inverter is designed to power monoblocks, LEDs, constant lights, and it can charge mobile devices. At the heart of the Encore Inverter is the latest li-ion technology, producing 3 full amps of charging power and a continuous 200-W output with a 2-second recycle time. According to Westcott, that's the equivalent of 800 full-power flashes when using a 300 Ws strobe. It has a dual-plug system, all-metal housing to protect the battery, and it weighs less than 5 lbs. The extruded aluminum shell reduces heat, providing a longer lifespan for the system and the removable battery. A carrying case is included. Additional batteries are available. The Encore Inverter sells for $299.90.

DxO Unveils
filmpack 5

FilmPack 5 Elite Edition from DxO Labs emulates the style, colors, and grain of more than 80 analog films, plus roughly 40 more creative styles. FilmPack 5 has a redesigned interface to make it easier to use. Included are designer presets and advanced settings, such as Hue/Saturation/Luminance, Tone Curve, Vibrancy, and more that allow you to fine-tune your photos. It can be used as a standalone app or as a plug-in with Adobe Photoshop, Lightroom, and DxO OpticsPro. Support is offered for RAW, JPEG, and TIFF formats.

FilmPack 5 Elite Edition is available now for $129. DxO also offers a pared-down Essential Edition version for amateur photographers that has fewer films and filters, no RAW support, and fewer controls. The Essential Edition costs $79. For more information, visit **www.dxo.com**.

Lenovo Announces
thinkpad 550s mobile workstation

The new ThinkPad 550s Mobile Workstation blends the compact size of an Ultrabook with the processing power of a mobile workstation. At the heart of the 550s is a 5th generation Intel Core i7 Dual Core processor and an NVIDIA Quadro K620M graphics card with 2GB of GPU memory. Up to a 1-TB HDD or 512-GB SSD is available, and it can accommodate up to 16 GB of RAM.

The ThinkPad 550s includes an integrated 4-in-1 media card reader and the following ports: one VGA, one mDP v1.2, three USB 3 (one always-on charging), one mic/headphone combo jack, one RJ45 gigabit Ethernet, one docking connector, and a smart card reader is optional. Three display options are available: a 1920x1080 Full HD, a 2880x1620 3k, or a 2880x1620 3k touch.

As of this writing, pricing and availability is not known. For complete specifications and options, visit **www.lenovo.com**.
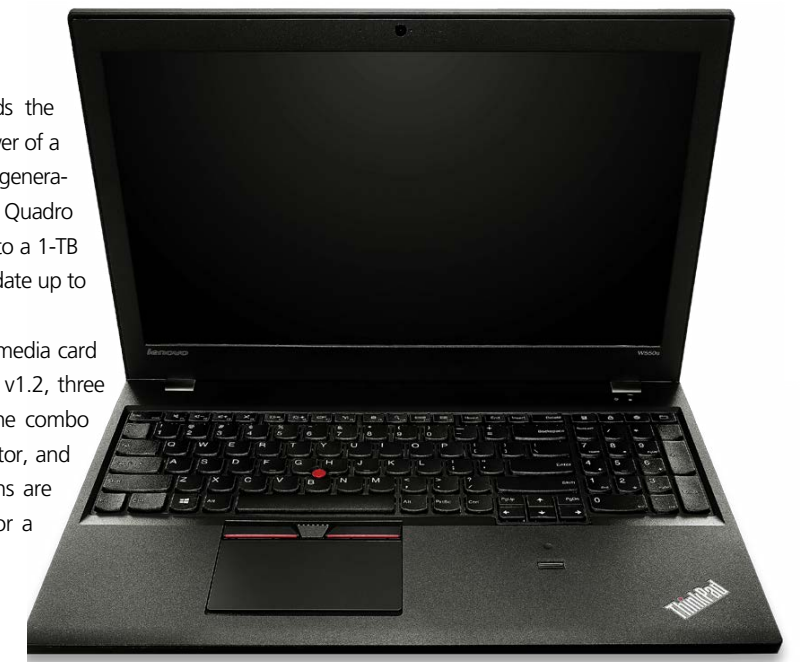
VideoBlocks Stock Video Marketplace
allows contributors to keep 100% of their sales

Recently, VideoBlocks announced the launch of a stock video marketplace that allows content creators to keep 100% of the proceeds from their sales. This new marketplace will work alongside VideoBlocks' existing subscription model.

Subscription members have access to a library of more than 100,000 premium, royalty-free stock video clips, motion backgrounds, and After Effects templates. According to VideoBlocks, because contributors keep 100% of the proceeds, they can offer significantly lower prices than their competitors.

For more information about VideoBlocks' subscriptions or to apply to become a contributor, visit **www.videoblocks.com**.

Tiffen Updates Their
dfx digital filter suite

Tiffen recently released version 4 of their popular digital filter suite, Dfx. This plug-in package replicates Tiffen optical filters, Rosco and Gam gobos and gels, and hundreds of photographic film stocks. Version 4 comes in several versions, including a film/video plug-in ($499.95) that works with popular video applications, such as Adobe After Effects and Premiere Pro; a photo plug-in ($149.99) that works with Photoshop and Lightroom; and a standalone version ($129.99) that works with JPEGs, TIFFs, and RAW files without a host application.

Dfx 4 includes 12 new filters ranging from Cartoon to Grunge to Pearlescent. New presets include 93 historical film processes and 30 motion picture film stocks. There are also new tools for color correction, tint enhancement, and gradient control. The ability to process in 32-bit floating point precision allows selective access to your image's dynamic range without clipping. The photo and standalone versions offer improved and faster masking tools and a new Curve tool. The combination of an improved interface and GPU acceleration using OpenCL provides for a much faster workflow throughout all the versions of Dfx.

There are also Dfx 4 OFX Pro ($999.95) and Standard versions ($499.95). These versions add OFX plug-in support, which means it will run in professional intermediate programs such as Blackmagic Design Davinci Resolve. For more information about each version of Dfx 4, visit **http://software.tiffen.com**. ◼

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Down & Dirty Tricks

light & color f/x

BY COREY BARKER

This was inspired by a magazine ad I saw recently for the new Michael Jackson show in Las Vegas. It had a very interesting color effect and illustrated style. After some experimenting I stumbled upon a very interesting series of steps to achieve a similar look on a photo. Enjoy!

Step One: Begin by opening the download file or a file of your own. If you use your own image, make sure it has a dark background, or extract the subject from the background before you get started. The image I'm using works well because it's fairly evenly lit and has a simple, dark background.

[*KelbyOne members may download the file used in this tutorial at* **http://kelbyone.com/magazine/issue/january** . *All files are for personal use only.*]

Step Two: Press D to set the Foreground and Background colors to their default black and white, respectively. Choose Image>Adjustments>Gradient Map, and click OK in the Gradient Map dialog that appears. This will convert the image to black and white. This is one of many methods I use for a black-and-white conversion.

Step Three: Duplicate the Background layer by pressing Command-J (PC: Ctrl-J), then hide the duplicate layer (Layer 1) by clicking its Eye icon in the Layers panel. Now reselect the Background layer.

Step Four: Go to Filter>Blur>Surface Blur. This allows you to smooth areas without losing any edge detail. We set the Radius to 7 pixels and the Threshold to 7 levels. Click OK.

Step One

Step Three

Surface Blur
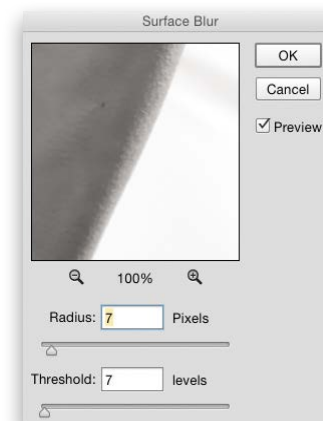
Step Five: Now choose Filter>Artistic>Poster Edges. If you don't see this, go to Filter>Filter Gallery and click on the Artistic folder to find the Poster Edges filter. Set the Edge Thickness to 0, Edge Intensity to 1, Posterization to 3, and click OK. This will give the image a more graphic look.

Step Five

Step Six: Go to the Layers panel and click the empty square where the Eye icon was for Layer 1, then Shift-click Layer 1 to select both layers. Choose File>New to create a new document measuring 9x12" at 150 ppi, then press Option-Delete (PC: Alt-Backspace) to make the background black. Select the Move tool (V), then click-and-drag the two layers to the new document. Remember to hold down the Shift key as you drag them over so the layers will be centered.
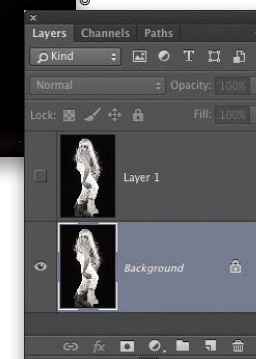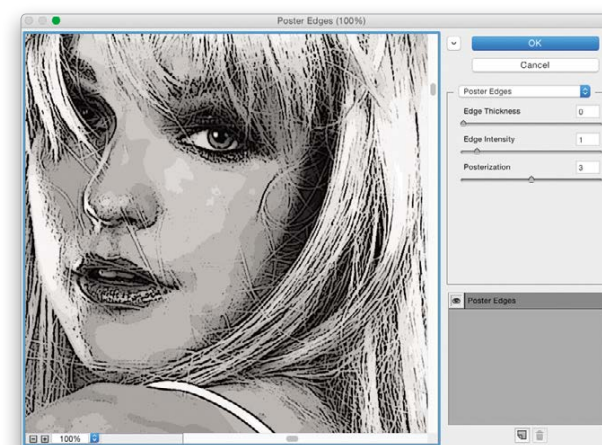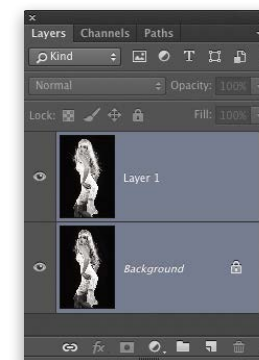
Step Six

Step Seven: Keeping both layers selected, press Command-T (PC: Ctrl-T) to invoke Free Transform, then press Command-0 (PC: Ctrl-0) to expand the document boundaries to reveal the transform box. Move the cursor just outside the transform box and when you see the curved arrow, click-and-drag to rotate the image counter-clockwise. Now grab a corner handle, press-and-hold Shift-Option (PC: Shift-Alt), and scale the image to fit in the composition, as shown here. Press Enter to commit the transformation. Be sure to keep both layers selected when doing this so they stay aligned.

Step Eight: Now once again turn off visibility for the duplicate layer (now Layer 2) and select the posterized layer (now Layer 1). Click the Create New Adjustment Layer icon (half-black, half-white circle) at the bottom of the Layers panel and choose Gradient Map. Click the gradient thumbnail in the Properties panel to access the Gradient Editor.
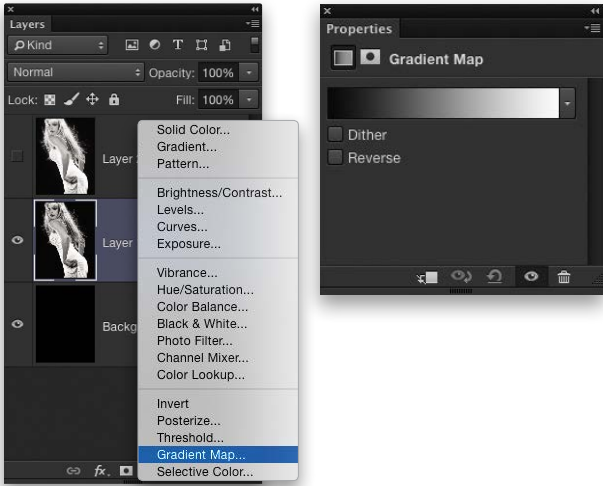
Step Nine: In the Gradient Editor that appears, click the gear icon in the upper right and choose Spectrums from the list. When prompted, click Append to add Spectrums to the existing list. Click the first preset in this set, which is called Spectrum. You'll immediately see an interesting color effect applied to the image. Click OK. If the background isn't a solid color, reselect the posterized layer (Layer 1), press Command-L (PC: Ctrl-L) for Levels, and drag the shadow Input Levels slider to the right until the color is solid. Click OK.

Step Seven
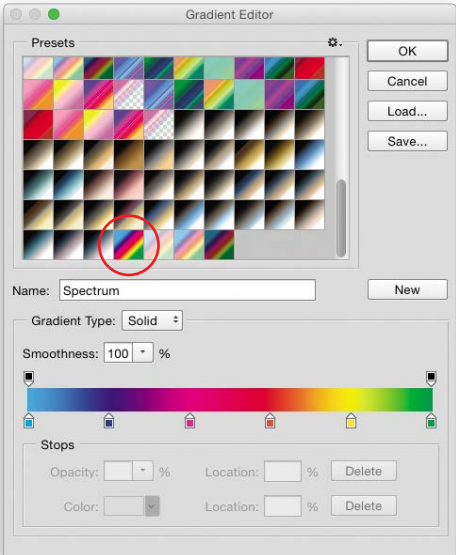
Step Nine

Step Ten: In the Layers panel, change the blend mode of the Gradient Map adjustment layer to Overlay. This drastically changes the color effect and is more in line with the warm color cast we're looking for with this effect.

Step Eleven: Remember that duplicate layer? Let's finally do something with it. Turn on the layer visibility and make sure it's selected. Go to Filter>Blur>Surface Blur. Run the same settings we used earlier to smooth out the detail.
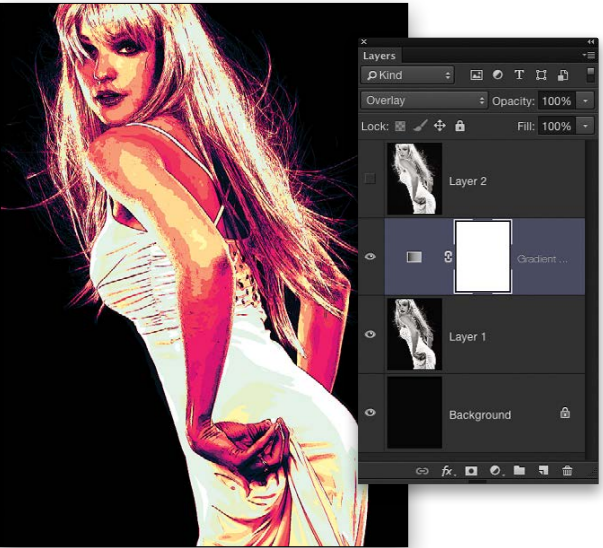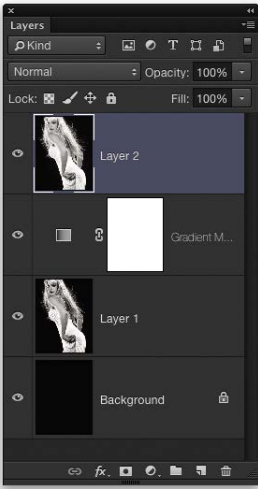
Step Twelve: Now go to Filter>Stylize>Find Edges. This will basically create an outline of the image based on the edge detail. Now we need to do a subtle Levels adjustment to boost the overall contrast and darken the lines a bit more. Press Command-L (PC: Ctrl-L) to bring up the Levels dialog, and drag the shadow and highlight Input Levels sliders, as shown here. Click OK.

Step Thirteen: Choose Image>Adjustments>Invert. This will flip the values around, making the lines white and the background black. In the Channels panel (Window>Channels), Command-click (PC: Ctrl-click) the RGB composite channel thumbnail. This will load the luminosity or brightness of the image as an active selection, which is just the outline.

Step Ten
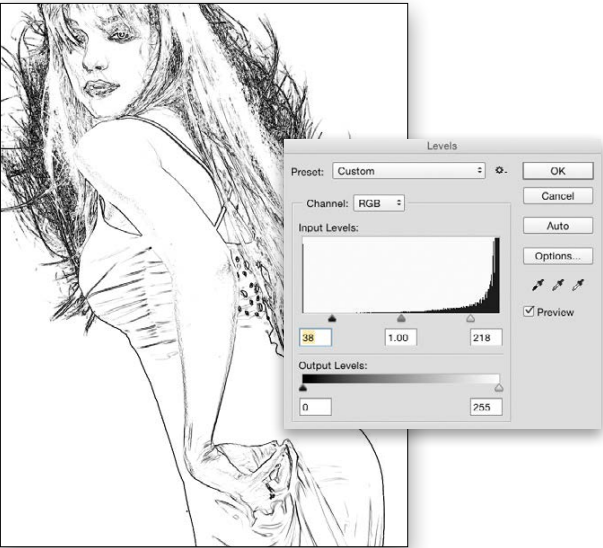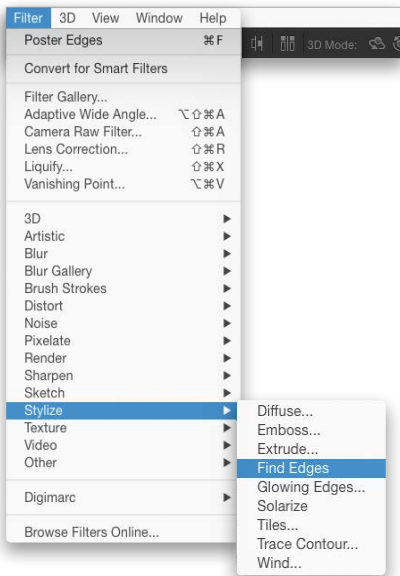
Step Twelve
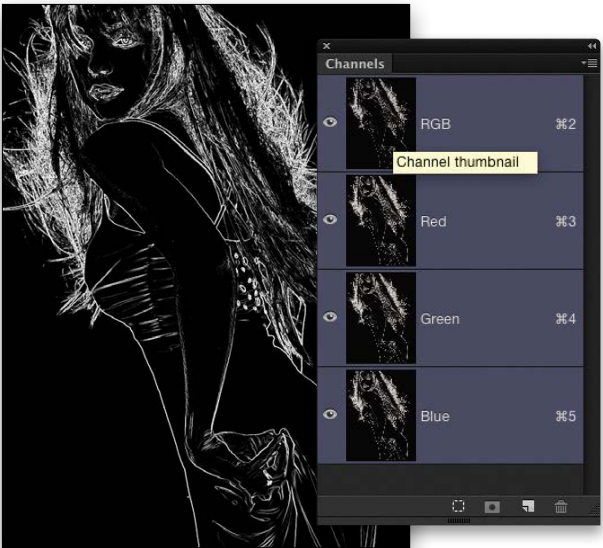
Step Thirteen

Step Fourteen: With the selection active, click the Create a New Layer icon at the bottom of the Layers panel (Layer 3). With the new blank layer selected, press Shift-Delete (PC: Shift-Backspace) to open the Fill dialog. Choose White from the Contents menu, leave Mode set to Normal, the Opacity at 100%, and click OK. Press Command-D (PC: Ctrl-D) to deselect. Hide the visibility for Layer 2. Now drag this new layer (Layer 3) below the Gradient Map adjustment layer in the layer stack, then change the blend mode to Overlay. Select the Gradient Map layer and drop the Opacity to 90%.
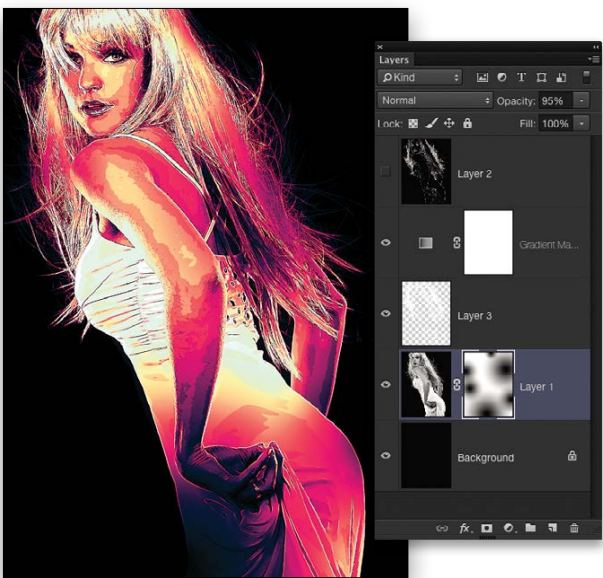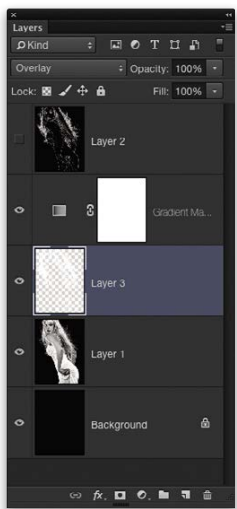
Step Fifteen: Select the posterized layer (Layer 1) and click the Add Layer Mask icon (circle in a square) to add a layer mask. Choose the Gradient tool (G) and, in the Options Bar, click on the gradient thumbnail. In the Gradient Editor dialog that appears, choose the Foreground to Transparent gradient, and click OK. Click the Radial Gradient icon in the Options Bar, and press X until the Foreground color is black. Now add random gradients around the layer mask to fade certain areas of the subject. As you do this, notice the gradient affects the color in interesting ways. The outline layer also emphasizes certain areas of the subject in a very stylish way. Continue to add more gradients in different areas. Be sure not to overdo it.
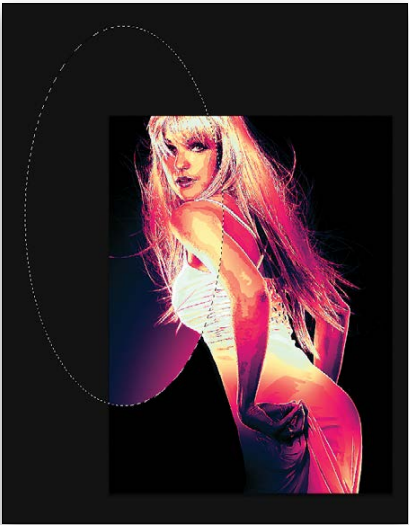
Step Sixteen: Now let's add one more light effect. Click the Create a New Layer icon, and choose the Elliptical Marquee tool (nested under the Rectangular Marquee tool [M]). Press Command-– (PC: Ctrl-–) to zoom out of the document, then drag out an oversized oval selection over the upper-left area of the image. Make sure the new blank layer is positioned under the adjustment layer.

Step Seventeen: Select the Gradient tool and press D then X to set the Foreground color to white. Then start the gradient from the bottom-right corner of the document, and drag to the center of the selection to introduce a subtle amount of white inside the selection. It will pick up the color of the adjustment layer and appear as a colored glare effect. We added a second gradient to the lower-right area, as well. When you're done, press Command-D (PC: Ctrl-D) to deselect.
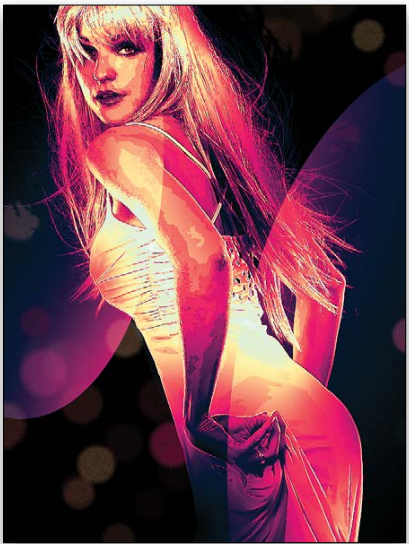
Finally, we added a subtle bokeh effect in the background using a custom brush to enhance the overall colored-light effect. You can see how I did the bokeh effect in a special video supplement, which can be found at **http://kelbyone.com/blog.** ■ ⏺

Step Fifteen

Step Seventeen

Rescue the Details.

BEFORE © Gary Lamott AFTER

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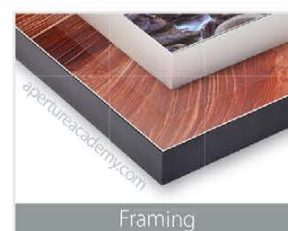
Creative Edge	Framing	Float Frame	Double Float	Exhibit Mount	Metal Easel Option

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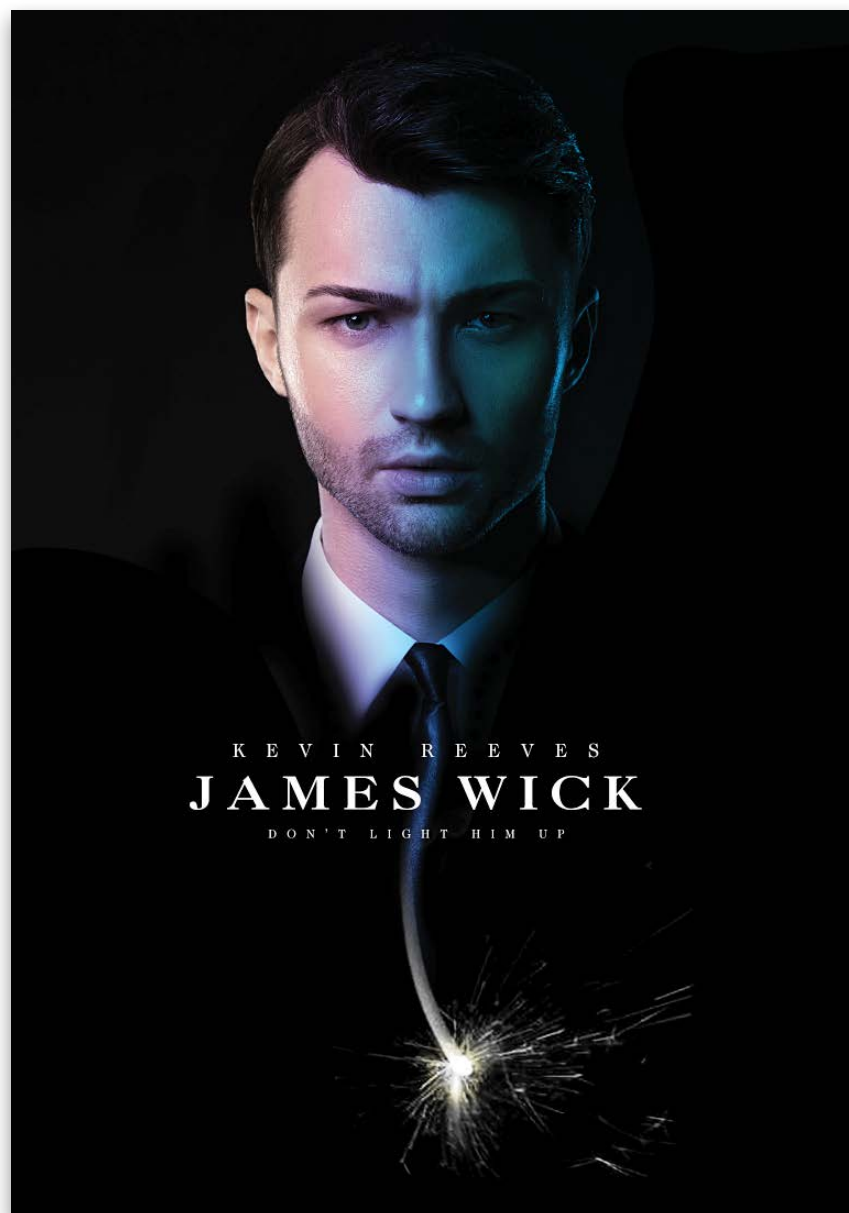
Down & Dirty Tricks

explosive color-gel light effect

BY FELIX NELSON

You might be wondering how a bullet-riddled, bloodbath of a movie like *John Wick* could inspire a color-gel lighting effect. Was it the close quarters action sequences? Or the completely unrealistic gunfights that seemingly occurred every few seconds? Nope. It was one of the promotional posters I saw after the fact. The color-gel light effect is simple and subtle. While adding a lit wick to the end of John's tie is as clever as it is basic, it all blends together perfectly.

Step One: Open a portrait image (preferably male) of someone wearing a suit jacket and tie. Click on the Create New Adjustment Layer icon (half-black, half-white circle) at the bottom of the Layers panel and choose Hue/Saturation. This will add an adjustment layer above the Background layer in the Layers panel and also open the Properties panel showing the Hue/Saturation properties. Enter –33 in the Saturation field to lessen the overall image saturation.

[*KelbyOne members may download the images used in this tutorial at* **http://kelbyone.com/magazine/issue/january-2015**. *All images are for personal use only.*]
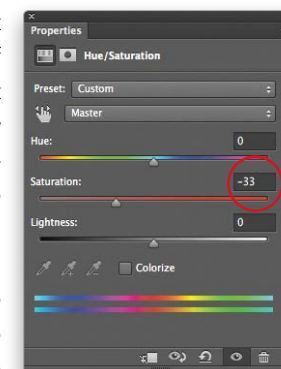
Step Two: Click on the Create New Adjustment Layer icon again and choose Levels. A new Levels adjustment layer will appear in the Layers panel, and the Properties panel will show the Levels properties. Enter 0.80 in the midtone field.
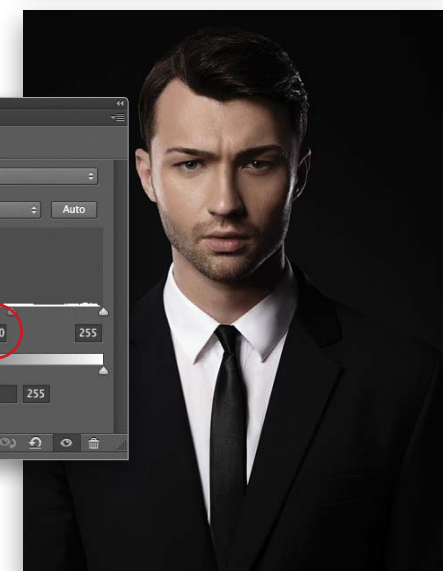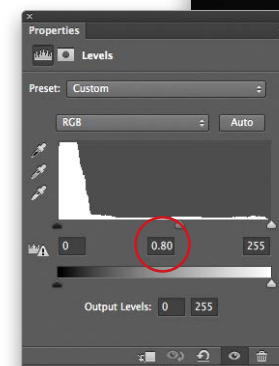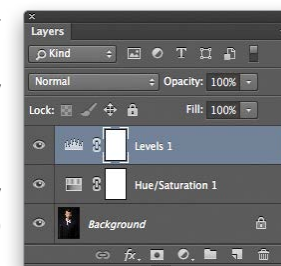
Step Three: Click on the Foreground color swatch at the bottom of the Toolbox. Choose a bright light-blue color (R:30, G:192, B:255), and click OK to close the Color Picker. Add a new layer by clicking on the Create a New Layer icon at the bottom of the Layers panel (Layer 1).
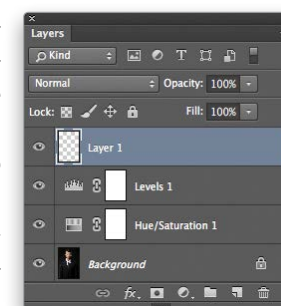
Step Four: Choose the Gradient tool (G) from the Toolbox. In the Options Bar, click on the gradient thumbnail. When the Gradient Editor dialog appears, choose the Foreground to Transparent preset, and click OK. Click the Linear Gradient icon (first on the left) in the Options Bar. Now click-and-drag a gradient from the center of his left eye to the center of his right eye (see example). Change the blend mode to Multiply in the Layers panel.

Step Five: Create another new layer (Layer 2). Change the Foreground color swatch to a lavender color (R:122, G:112, B:184). In the Options Bar, choose the Reflected Gradient icon (the fourth icon from the left). Click-and-drag a gradient from the inside corner of his right eye to the outside of his right ear (see example). Change the layer blend mode to Overlay.

Step Six: Create another new layer (Layer 3). Press D to set the Foreground color to black. Press Option-Delete (PC: Alt-Backspace) to fill the entire layer with black. Click on the Add Layer Mask icon (circle in a square) at the bottom of the Layers panel. Choose the Brush tool (B) from the Toolbox. Using a soft-edged brush set to black (press D then X), paint to reveal areas around the face, collar, and portion of the tie (see example).
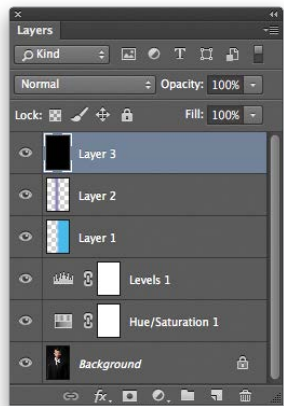
Note: You'll have to use smaller brush sizes to reveal portions of the shirt, lapel, and tie. Use the Bracket keys on your keyboard to quickly change the size of your brush. Also reveal a slightly curved portion along the edge of the tie. If you reveal too much, press X to switch the Foreground color to white, and paint to hide those areas (you can also adjust the mask later if needed).

Step Seven: Create a new layer (Layer 4). Press X to switch the Foreground color to white. Using a small, soft-edged brush, paint a curve over the highlight on the tie, following the contour of the tie (see example). Change the layer blend mode to Overlay. This will enhance the existing highlight and will help create a more realistic effect when we add the fuse element.

Step Eight: Open an image that has a lit fuse on a black background. Using the selection tool of your choice (we used the Lasso tool [L]), make a loose selection around the fuse and sparks. Switch to the Move tool (V). Click-and-drag the selection into the original image (Layer 5). Press Command-Shift-U (PC: Ctrl-Shift-U) to desaturate the image (make it gray). Change the blend mode to Screen.
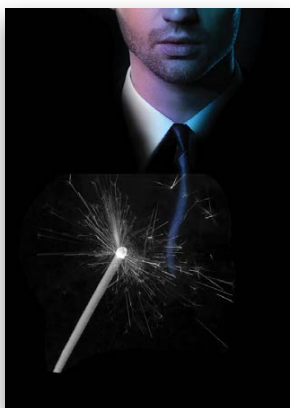
Step Nine: Press Command-T (PC: Ctrl-T) to bring up the Free Transform bounding box. Right-click inside the bounding box and choose Flip Vertical. Resize and reposition the fuse so that the unlit end aligns with the end of the tie highlight. Press Enter to apply the transformation.

Step Ten: Click on the Add Layer Mask icon at the bottom of the Layers panel. Choose the Gradient tool and click on the Linear Gradient icon in the Options Bar. Click-and-drag a gradient from the unlit end of the fuse toward the lit portion (see example).
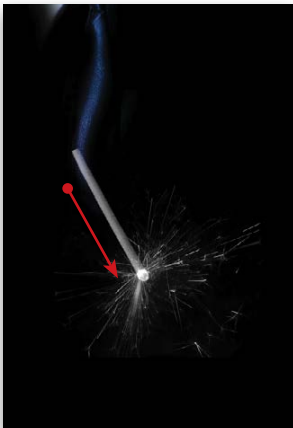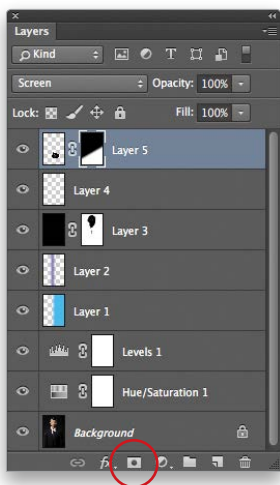
Step Eleven: Go to Edit>Transform>Warp. Click-and-drag the lower-right corner of the top-left grid square toward the lower left to slightly bend the fuse (see example). Press Enter to apply the Warp. You may have to use the Move tool to realign the fuse layer (Layer 5) with the lower portion of the tie highlight.
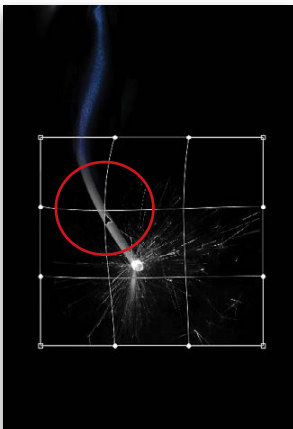
Step Twelve: Add a new layer (Layer 6). Press D then X to set the Foreground color to white. Choose the Brush tool. Using a soft-edged brush, paint a white spot over the top of the burning fuse (see example). Change the blend mode to Overlay.
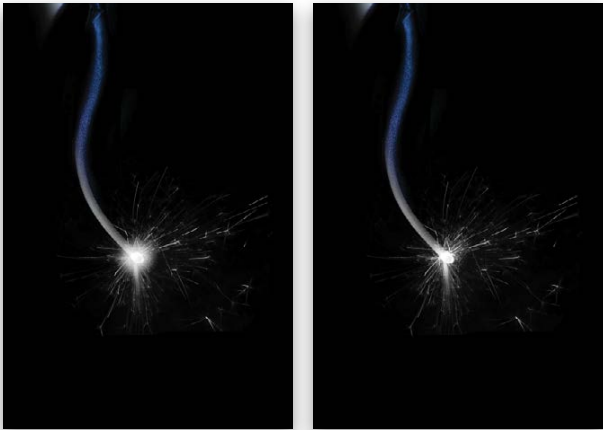
Step Thirteen: Click on the Add a Layer Style icon (*fx*) at the bottom of the Layers panel and choose Outer Glow. Set the Blend Mode to Overlay and the Opacity to 75%. Click the yellow color swatch, choose an orange color (R:249, G:199, B:65), and click OK to close the Color Picker. Enter 9% for Spread and 250 px for Size. Click OK to apply the layer style. Add some text to complete the effect. ■ ⇔
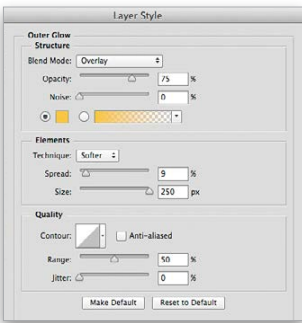
Before
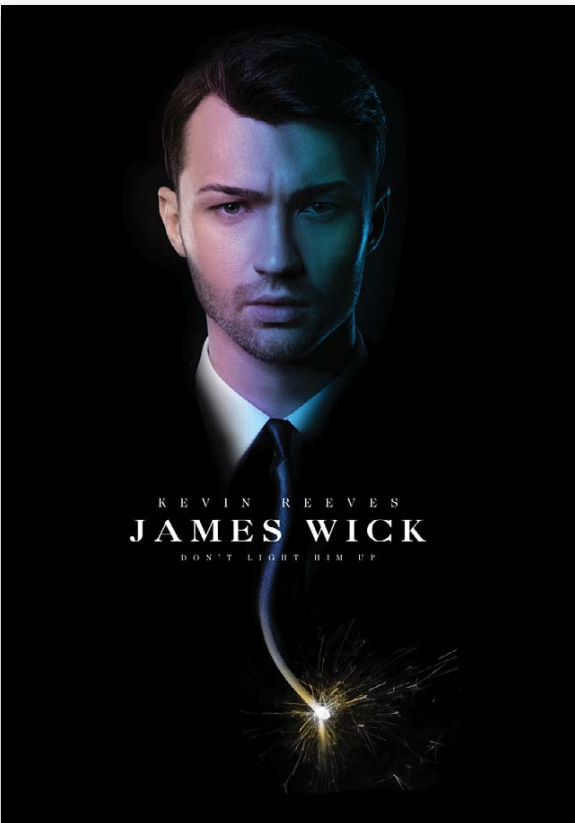
After

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Sneaky Pete's Critter Catchin' Superworm

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"Fish can't wait...
to take this bait!"

Down & Dirty Tricks

mix it up

BY PETE COLLINS

One of the secret powers of the Mixer Brush is that it can sample multiple colors or even pixels to use for its stroke. This is great for creating color-rich strokes to simulate painting with a real brush, but for this project we're going to use an image as the paint source to create repeating segments that can be used for anything from robot arms to your very own superworm.

Step One: Start with an image of a sphere. (You'll probably want to try a lot of different types of images after this, but let's start simple.) If you're using a stock image, use the Elliptical marquee tool (nested under the Rectangular Marquee tool [M] in the Toolbox) to make a selection around the sphere. (*Tip:* As you're drawing the selection, you can press-and-hold the Spacebar to reposition the selection.) Press Command-J (PC: Ctrl-J) to create a copy of the sphere on its own layer.

[*KelbyOne members may download the file used in this tutorial at* **http://kelbyone.com/magazine/issue/january-2015**. *All files are for personal use only.*]

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Step Two: Create a new 12x8" document (File>New) at 300 ppi, set the Background Contents drop-down menu to Transparent, and click OK. Using the Move tool (V), click-and-drag the copied sphere into this new document. You can use a Color Overlay layer style or a Hue/Saturation adjustment layer to recolor your sphere if you need to. You'll probably need to use Free Transform (Command-T [PC: Ctrl-T]) to size the sphere so that it's slightly larger than the widest part of the worm that you want to create to give yourself a little wiggle room.
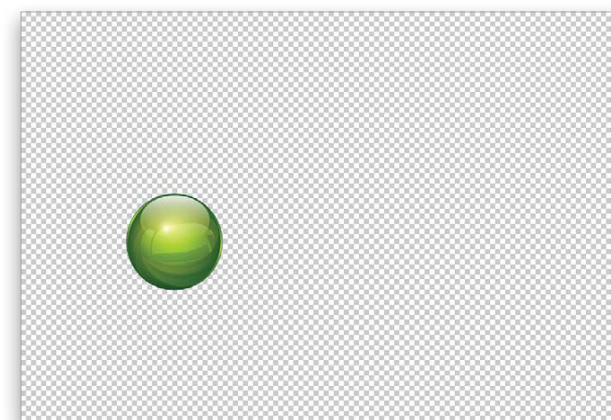
Step Three: Make sure that you have the Mixer Brush tool selected. If not, click-and-hold on the Brush tool (B) in the Toolbox, and choose the Mixer Brush from the flyout menu (or cycle
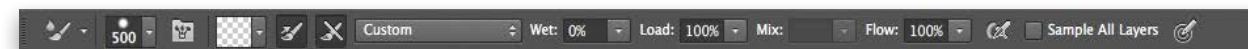
through the Brush tools by pressing Shift-B). You'll notice that the Options Bar for the Mixer Brush has a few more items than the regular Brush tool. There are several important options that have to be set correctly for this to work. The fifth icon from the left is the toggle for Load the Brush after Each Stroke, and it needs to be clicked on in order to load up the sphere colors. The Wet setting needs to be at 0%, the Load and Flow at 100%, and Sample All Layers needs to be turned off.

Step Four: This process is a lot like sampling something for the Clone Stamp tool; the only difference is that the Mixer Brush only clones what's inside the diameter of the brush, so you'll need to choose a hard-edged round brush that's slightly larger than the sphere (we used a dotted line here so you can better see the circumference of the brush in our example). For a hard-edged brush, click on the brush preview thumbnail in the Options Bar to open the Brush Preset Picker, and set the Hardness to 100%. Use the Bracket Keys on your keyboard to quickly change the size of the brush.
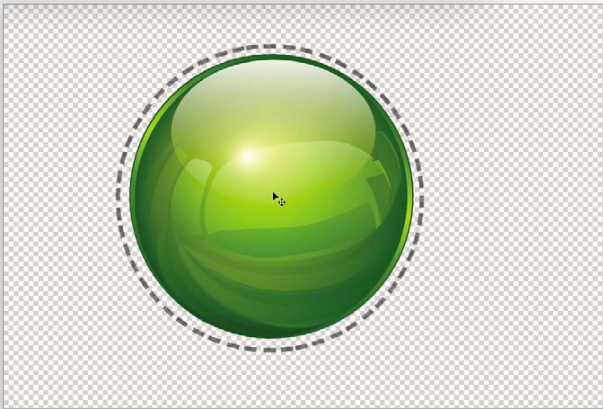
Now place your Mixer Brush cursor in the center of the sphere and hold down Option (PC: Alt) and click to sample. You should see the sphere appear in the small preview thumbnail in the Options Bar next to the Load the Brush icon. If you accidentally left Sample All Layers turned on and, say, you're working on a white background, your sample will probably have a white border around the sphere that you might not notice until later, which can cause problems.

Step Five: Now that you have your brush loaded and ready to go, click on the Create a New Layer icon at the bottom of the Layers panel, and give it a whirl. Depending on what brush you've chosen and its settings, you can either have a really cool-looking Doc Octopus arm-like stroke or a big blob. The first things to check if things don't look right are the Load and Flow settings. If they're not at full strength, it can result in some transparency, and if you have the Wet option turned on, it can cause the stroke to smear together. The top example here is correct, but the bottom example has Wet set to 100%.
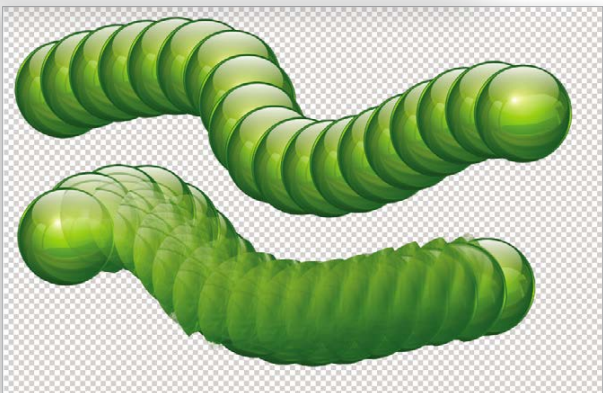
Step Six: One of the most powerful features in Photoshop is the Brush engine, and we're going to open it to tweak the look of the stroke. The good news is that we're only adjusting a couple of settings. Click on the third icon from the left in the Options Bar and the Brush panel pops open. Make sure Brush Tip Shape is selected at the top of the list on the left side of the panel. You only have to adjust one slider here, Spacing. Moving it to the left paints the spheres closer together; moving it to the right paints the spheres further apart. With the panel open, you can make practice strokes in your document and see the results. Tweak until you're happy.
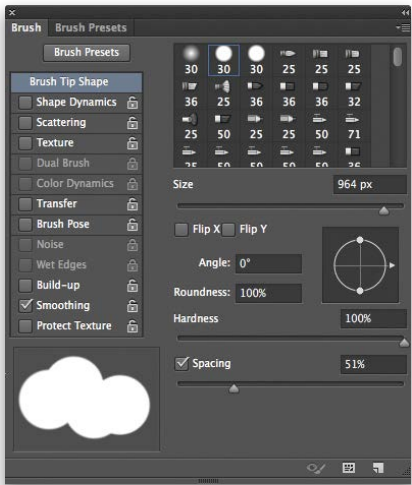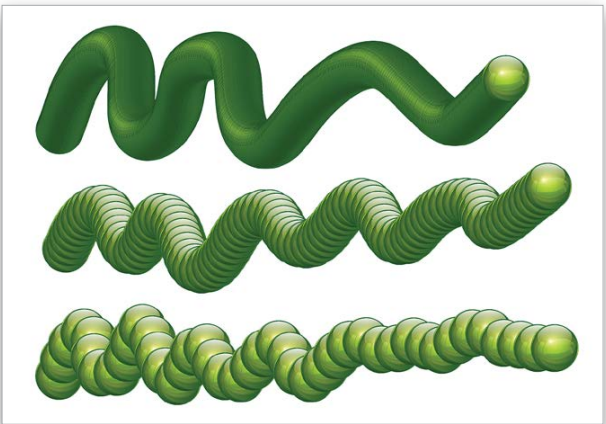
Step Seven: If you have a pressure-sensitive input device such as a Wacom Intuos tablet, then you can go to the Shape Dynamics section in the Brush panel and choose Pen Pressure from the Control drop-down menu under Size Jitter. Also, make sure that Pen Pressure is turned off in the Transfer section, as you don't want the pen pressure affecting the transparency. This will allow you to make parts of your worm smaller or larger by simply applying more pressure. An even faster way is to simply toggle on the last icon in the Mixer Brush Options Bar to get the same result.
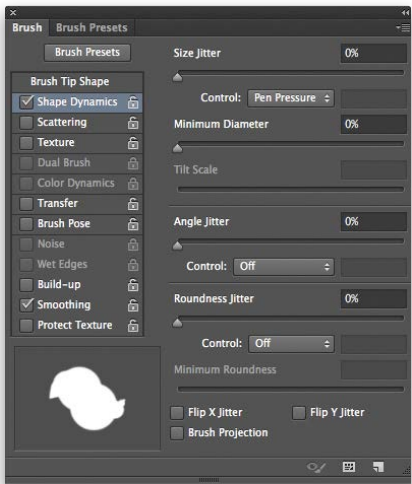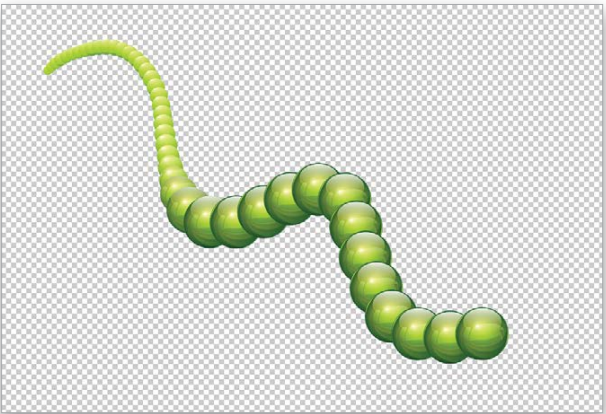
Step Eight: If you don't have a pressure-sensitive device, you can still get the look you want by combining a couple of techniques. Draw out a straight worm that's as fat as the fattest part on a new layer. Use Edit>Puppet Warp to reshape the worm, trying your best to keep it as smooth and natural as possible. Simply click in several places along the length of the worm to add pins and then drag individual pins to see how it affects the shape. If you mess up on a section, you can always click on that pin, delete it, and start again.

Once you get it pretty close, press Enter to commit the Puppet Warp, and then use Filter>Liquify to help smooth it out and taper it a bit. Remember, use the Forward Warp tool (W) in Liquify to make small adjustments and just bump the edges over and over until you get the shape you want—baby steps.

Step Nine: Double-check that Sample All Layers is turned off—this will get you almost every time as seen in the example below. Also pay attention to the direction of the light on the spheres: it will look a lot different when you paint in different directions. If you're creating multiple tentacles, create each one on its own layer to make adjustments and masking easier.

If you can use a pressure-sensitive tablet, envision drawing in three dimensions and it will help you regulate the pressure better. In other words, if you think about one end of the worm being smaller because it's farther back in the image and the other end being bigger because it's getting closer as it moves across the page, it will help influence your hand. Weird, but it works.
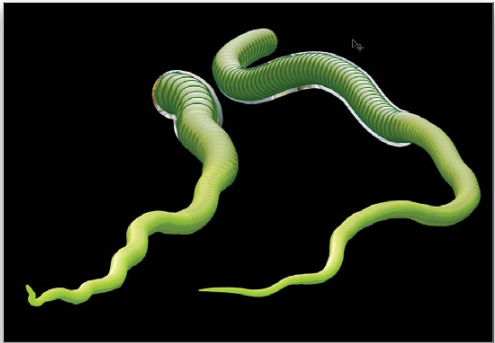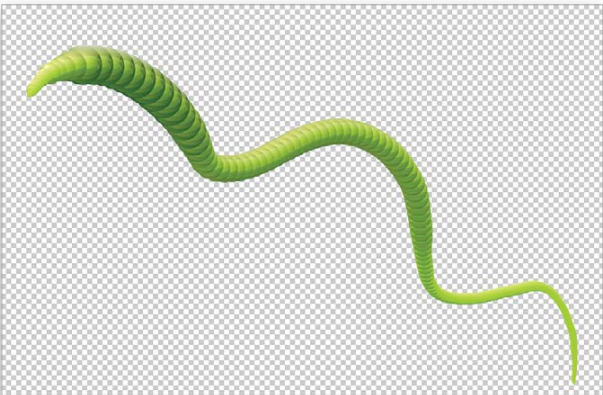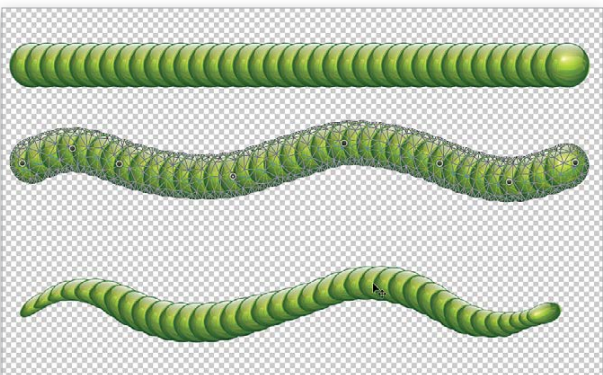
Step Ten: That's all there is to it. Because this technique is so easy and cool, once you get the hang of it, the hardest part will be to come up with new ways to use tentacles in your imagery. Perhaps you could specialize in robotics rendering or ductwork diagraming, or maybe you will land a gig luring folks to try out fishing. But that's just a drop in the ocean. Don't stop at just making tentacles; see what other images you can sample to come up with your own superfunky Mixer Brush strokes.

Understanding how a tool works empowers the craftsman to create more things faster and better. Creating something fun like superworms is a great way to better understand the Mixer Brush and opens the door to creating "reel" pretty pictures. ■ ⏎

Get hooked!
Sneaky Pete's Critter Catchin' Superworm

"Fish can't wait...
to take this bait!"

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San Francisco Spine Pain Relief Center
www.sfchiro.org

DESIGNER
Caroline Main
www.cnmdesignstudios.com

window treatment

[before]
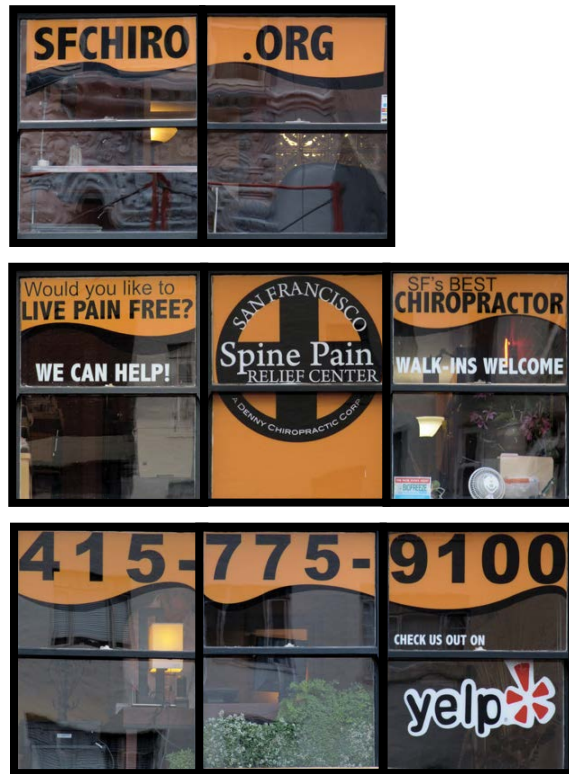
▶ Dr. Lonna Denny first opened her chiropractic practice in 2002 under the name Optimum Health Chiropractic. In 2011, she reorganized as a corporation—Denny Chiropractic Corp.—and changed the name of the business to the San Francisco Spine Pain Relief Center. At that time, they also did a visual refresh of the brand to go with the new name, including their current logo.

Besides appearing on their business cards and other collateral, the logo is the centerpiece of their office's row of second-floor windows overlooking San Francisco's Geary Street. The three windows to one side of the logo offer the Center's Web address and an invitation to live pain-free, while the four windows on the other side provide the phone number and a declaration that they're the city's best chiropractor.

When asked what sets her practice apart, Dr. Denny says, "One of the main differences is that we have a cold laser, so we treat extremities and sports injuries." They handle a lot of personal injury cases for attorneys, she points out. She also tries to differentiate her practice from the general category of natural or alternative medicine. "We're really professional," she says. "There's nothing 'alternative' about our office in downtown San Francisco."

Besides that professionalism, she also wants passersby looking at her windows to get the impression of an operation that's clean-cut, thorough, and luxurious. While Dr. Denny is happy with her current logo and isn't seeking a rebranding, she agreed to let us give three designers a crack at her window presentation—including her logo, if the designers wished.

> "We're really professional. There's nothing 'alternative' about our office in downtown San Francisco."

[after]
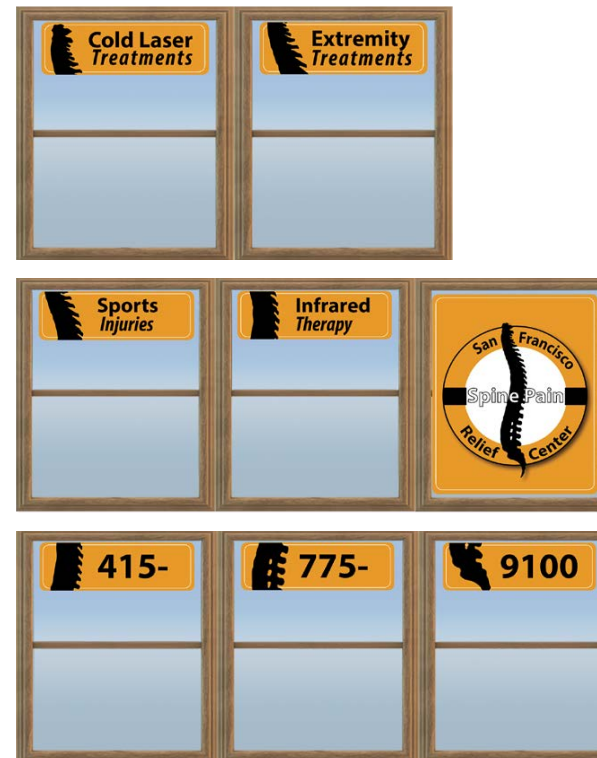
▶ My idea for the window redesign for the San Francisco Spine Pain Relief Center was to be straight, to the point, and clean-cut. I kept the original colors of orange and black. This being a doctor's office, I wanted to integrate an image from the human body of the doctor's specialty without being graphic, while still keeping the branding modern, as well as professional.

The signs needed an image that communicates that this is a medical office. The new signs feature the silhouette of the spine, colored black against the orange background. Each of the individual signs displays a different section of the spine. The order of the sections run from top to bottom, with the top section on the far left and the bottom section at the far right. I did this both because I didn't want to repeat the same image and because I wanted to establish a flow from the left to the right. The windows now also tell a story, showing each piece of the spine. For the signs on the right, I kept the phone number because it makes it easy for patients to contact the doctor for an appointment.

In addition to the series of smaller signs, I reworked the logo to match the branding and also incorporate the spine silhouette. The new logo retains the shape of the medical cross while using the silhouette of the spine as the vertical line. The squares on both sides and the words "Spine Pain" form the horizontal line of the cross.

I chose Myriad Pro for the font because I feel it's easy to read and professional. Rounding the edges of the signs gives them a modern feel and also reflects the fact that the spine has a curve to it.

about the designer

CAROLINE MAIN

Caroline Main is an artist, graphic designer, and crafter who has always had a passion for creativity. Since childhood, she always enjoyed drawing and painting pictures of her family, nature, and abstract designs. Her childhood interest in art grew to include Web and graphic design in high school. She has also toyed with the idea of becoming an art teacher, getting a bachelor's degree in art with a minor in education from the University of Virginia's College at Wise, supplemented by additional night classes in graphic and Web design.

Caroline continues to gain experience creating designs for events, nonprofits, small businesses, and others. Her design work includes creating logos, print design, and more. Her inspiration continues to stem from nature, and her favorite design work is logo design. Caroline currently resides in Salt Lake City, Utah, with her husband, where she works as a full-time graphic designer and does freelance, as well.

APPLICATIONS USED: Adobe Illustrator CS6 and Adobe InDesign CS6

DESIGNER
Taffy Clifford
http://members.photoshopuser.com/TaffCliff/portfolio

DESIGNER
David Ellsworth
www.DavidEllsworthDesign.com

[after]
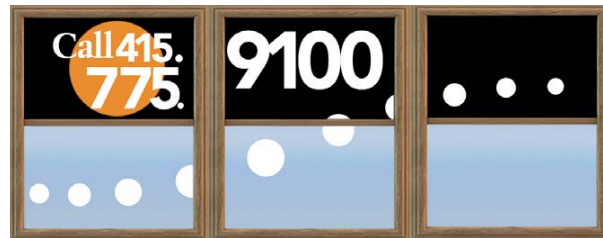
The San Francisco Spine Pain Relief Center owner likes her existing logo, which has only recently been redone, so I used that as the basis for redesigning the window signage. I wanted to keep a very clean look and feel, but at the same time create something that would stand out on this building among all the other business signs.

Being that they are located on the second floor, I thought that using circles along with the client's logo colors of orange, black, and white would work nicely to give the windows a bold and clean design that could stand out and be easily readable from street level. Since it's a chiropractor's office, I decided to use a wave of circles in the design to emulate the shape of the spine. The wave flows nicely from the first window to the last.

The current windows use an orange background all the way across, which to me makes them look a bit outdated. My redesign can work two ways: in one variation, the top of the window has a black background, which helps the text and other elements to stand out more. If the client doesn't want such a dark background on the windows, the design works just as well with just the colored circles. This approach would allow for an up-to-date, fun, easily readable design while still letting plenty of natural light into the offices.

I chose two fonts for the redesign. The sans-serif Avenir Lt Std Black is a popular standard font that's very easy to read, and works well on this large-scale design. I also put some of the text in Trump Mediaeval Lt Standard Bold, which appears to be the same font that was used in the client's logo. It ties the logo in with the rest of the design and also makes some of the text stand out more.

[after]

I found this to be a bit of a difficult redesign project due to the multiple windows that are spaced out and have a window frame running through the center. I felt that having a solid image that would run the length and height of each window would be too busy, would become distorted if the windows were partially opened (as some of them are in the practice's Facebook cover photo), and might make the windows difficult to use. After looking through their website and social media pages and looking closer at their business location, I decided to design a set of graphics that would cover the windows, but would be broken up in color for the top and bottom of each window.

I pulled the orange color from their logo and chose a darker blue secondary color for a lightly pinstriped background, which would help make the orange stand out while giving it a professional look. I also included a slight curved line running across the windows, which is a subtle reference to the correct curvature of the spine.

I pulled the fonts from their existing logo to maintain a consistent look across the entire graphic. The current windows don't display a list of services offered, so I incorporated the list from their website. That way, potential customers can immediately see what they offer, which will hopefully drive traffic into their office or at least let people easily read the contact information for use at a later time.

My decision to cover each window completely was to allow more of an impact from the street and to minimize the amount of office shown inside, which distracts from their current signage. I would suggest printing the design on perforated window decals, which would allow privacy from the outside while letting light into the office and allowing clients and staff to still see out.

about the designer

TAFFY CLIFFORD

Taffy has 20 years of experience as a graphic designer. She was working in the construction industry full-time in Boston as a subcontracts coordinator and field engineer, when she realized that her part-time job as a graphic designer was what she really wanted to do. Since then, she's gained experience in marketing and promotional materials, logos, and website design for various clients. She's worked as a senior graphic designer for Staples Corp. in Framingham, Massachusetts, and for Impact Advertising and Florida Suncoast Tourism Promotions in Florida.

She currently works at Kelby Media Group (*Photoshop User*'s publisher), where she's been the senior associate designer for a little more than 10 years now. She primarily works as the graphic designer for *Photoshop User*'s feature articles. She also worked as a designer on *Mac Design*, *Layers*, *Adobe Photoshop Elements Techniques*, and *Adobe Illustrator Techniques* magazines. Originally from Massachusetts, she moved to Florida 18 years ago and now lives in Dunedin.

about the designer

DAVID ELLSWORTH

David Ellsworth is a graphic designer based out of Pembroke, Massachusetts. He currently works full-time for an engineering firm based in Albany, New York, in their in-house design group. He is also a freelance artist with numerous clients around the New England area, including restaurants, attractions, authors, local films, and more.

David is a big believer in networking and maintaining a solid client relationship. He has won several design contests throughout the years; most recently he was awarded first place in the yearly design contest at **PhotoshopCafe.com** and has had worked published in *Popular Photography* magazine. This is his second entry in the *Photoshop User* "Design Makeover."

David also enjoys special effects make-up and acting work for Barrett's Haunted Mansion in Abington, Massachusetts. He would like to thank his wife Amy, daughter Becca (5), and son Logan (2) for their continued support and source of inspiration. ■ ▭

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Beginners' Workshop
getting started with liquify

LESA SNIDER

When fabric wrinkles, jowls strike, tummies pooch, or eyes squint, the Liquify filter is your best friend. In this column, you'll learn how to use it nondestructively for some heavy-duty yet realistic retouching. Not all portraits need this level of fluffing, but if your client requests it, here's how to get it done.

▶ **Step One:** Happily, the Liquify filter in Photoshop CC works with smart filters, meaning you can use it nondestructively. If your document consists of one layer, choose Filter>Convert for Smart Filters. If you have multiple layers, activate them by holding Shift or Command (PC: Ctrl) and clicking on them. Then choose Filter>Convert for Smart Filters. Click OK in the resulting dialog and Photoshop sandwiches your layers into one. In CS6 or earlier, create a stamped copy of visible layers by pressing Shift-Option-Command-E (PC: Shift-Alt-Ctrl-E), and then drag the resulting layer to the top of your layer stack.

Tip: To reopen your original layers, double-click the thumbnail of the sandwiched layer (the smart object) and they open in a temporary document. Make your changes, choose File>Save (not Save As), close the temporary document, and your changes appear in the original document.

[*KelbyOne members may download the files used in this tutorial at* **http://kelbyone.com/magazine/issue/january-2015**. *All files are for personal use only.*]

Step Two: Choose Filter>Liquify and turn on Advanced Mode. In this example, the Clone Stamp tool was already used (on an empty layer) to remove the jowl shadow, leaving us with the task of scooting the jaw pixels inward. First, freeze areas near the jaw so they don't move; press F to grab the Freeze Mask tool and drag across her shoulder and neck wrinkle (don't freeze the hair strand as it needs to move with the jaw). With the Show Mask checkbox turned on, a red overlay appears as you drag. If you freeze too much, press D to grab the Thaw Mask tool and paint across that area.

Step Three: Press W to grab the Forward Warp tool. It pushes pixels forward, ahead of your cursor in the direction you drag. It's great for bulge-busting, waist-nipping, arm-slimming, and tugging mouth corners upward into a smile. Mouse over to the right side of her jaw and with a brush roughly the size of the area you want to affect, drag to move pixels right and slightly upward. Reduce the brush size as you near the chin. *Tip:* Decrease the brush size with the Left Bracket key ([) and increase it with the Right Bracket key (]). To undo brushstrokes one at a time, press Command-Option-Z (PC: Ctrl-Alt-Z) repeatedly.
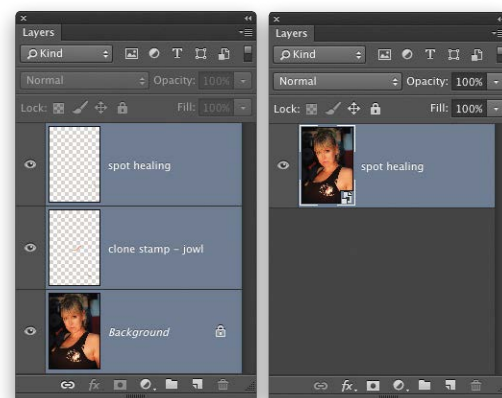
Step One
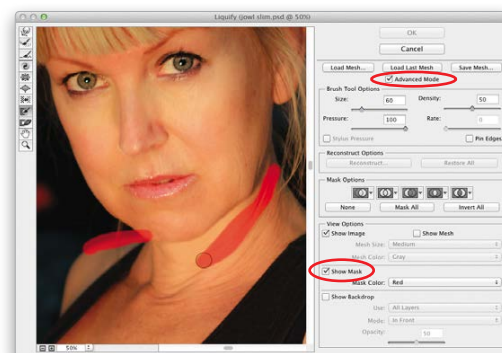
Step Two
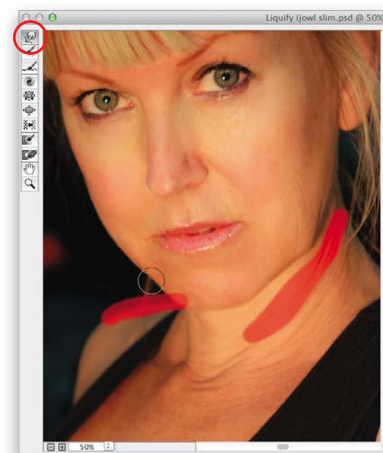
Step Three

If you produce a rippled edge, press E to activate the Smooth tool (new in CC 2014) and brush over that area to soften the edit's strength. Keep brushing and you'll eventually remove the edit, or you can press R to grab the Reconstruct tool and remove the edit in one stroke.

Step Four: Repeat for the left side of her jaw, and click OK when finished. To reopen the filter for more editing, double-click the word "Liquify" in the Layers panel. Here's the final result.

Now, let's perform some tummy tucking and waist slimming on another image.

Step One: Follow Steps One and Two above to prepare your document for smart filters, open Liquify, and freeze areas near the ones you'll change. Press W to grab the Forward Warp tool and push the pixels inward toward her waist (while the Push Left tool is great for slimming, it will distort the bricks more than the Forward Warp tool will). Adjust brush size according to the area you want to affect; for example, use a bigger brush to slim the waist and a smaller one to push in fabric folds (shown here).

Step Two: Press S to grab the Pucker tool, which is great for shrinking areas. Make your brush *nearly* as big as the tummy (to avoid changing areas that you don't want to), and click repeatedly to collapse pixels in on themselves. The pucker effect is concentrated in the cursor's center, so make a few clicks on the tummy's left and a few on the right to make the pucker even. Click OK when finished. If necessary, reopen Liquify and continue editing, or use the Smooth or Reconstruct tools as described earlier. *Tip:* Pressing Option (PC: Alt) makes the Pucker tool act like the Bloat tool, which is great for enlarging squinty eyes, lips, etc.

Step Three: To fix the brick smearing due to the slimming, press Shift-Command-N (PC: Shift-Ctrl-N) to create a new layer, name it "clone stamp – bricks," and click OK. Press S to grab the Clone Stamp tool. In the Options Bar, set the Sample menu to All Layers.

Step Four: Option-click (PC: Alt-click) the area you want Photoshop to copy pixels from (the sample point, note the crosshair circled here), release your mouse button, move to the area you want to fix and then drag to start copying pixels. You'll need to change your sample point often to re-create brick texture and mortar.

Here's the final result. As you can see, editing with the Liquify filter takes time but it's extremely powerful. By using smart filters, your original image remains unharmed, plus you can fine-tune your edits later. Until next time, may the creative force be with you all. ■ ▭

Before   *After*

Step One   *Step Two*

Step Four

Developing
a Business Plan

By Tamara Lackey

I often hear people say that they're creative, but they're not that good at business, or that they're business-minded but not really the artsy type. Although people may lean more in one direction than in the other, the idea that you have to be *either-or* is simply not true. Assuming you're a creative wanting to get a better handle on your business, consider this: One of the simplest ways to tackle the concept of building a roadmap for your business is to write a good, old-fashioned business plan. Just consider doing so in a more modern way.

Why Create a Business Plan ?

Why should you create a business plan, especially if you're not planning to seek out funding or to ever sell your business? Here are several reasons:

1. Having all your ideas, metrics, strengths, weaknesses, projections, and risks (and so much more) documented in one place is perhaps one of the most helpful things you can do for yourself if you're running a small business.

2. Creative individuals are often easily swayed by emotions or the next best thing. Having a business plan allows you to look at your business in a more cool-headed manner and objectively see what you had planned all along. The simple decision to keep a single-minded focus, and to not keep changing gears, is a rare and rewarding one.

3. The very act of writing a business plan forces you to stop and think about all the aspects of what you're building, helping to determine what to include and what to exclude.

4. The effort of projecting year-end goals enables you to determine how feasible your business model really is. It's quite possible to have a great-looking business that loses money year after year after year because the business owner doesn't pull back and look at the numbers.

5. It offers you the best opportunity to create authentic branding that really fits you, your work, and your efforts to reach your target market.

6. It enables you to build a marketing plan that takes into account your brand identity, as well as a realistic projection of your budget and timelines.

When creating a business plan, you don't want a static document that doesn't account for the almost assured fact that things will change often—and rather reliably so. A business plan isn't meant to be tucked away and referenced as if it were written in stone. It's not meant to be something you write and then lock yourself into long term. Instead, if you create your plan with the intention of it being a living document that you revisit often, you'll enable yourself maximum control over your business now and in the future.

There's one additional perk of a creative individual taking the time and effort to create a business plan: Truly understanding the critical aspects of business provides a more secure base from which to be truly creative. If your business is all over the place, and you're just reacting to what the day brings you, how much energy do you really have left to be truly creative? By better understanding—and then practicing—sound business structure, a base to build or keep building your business from, you actually generate a significant amount of additional time and energy, which translates rather naturally into free, creative energy. It may seem counterintuitive to suggest more structure to get more creative energy but, in my experience—and in the experience of a number of successful creatives—it bears out as true time and time again.

By writing a business plan, you get to answer some pretty important questions:

1. What do you want your business to be known for?
2. How are you going to sell that?
3. How are you going to run your business to provide for that?
4. How are you going to make a profit you'll be happy with, the money you take home after the expenses of doing business?

Once you've decided it makes sense to have a plan, here comes the next biggest hurdle: actually getting started.

Overcoming your own resistance to creating a plan can be a huge factor. What are some reasons you might procrastinate?

1. You don't know where to start.
2. It all seems so big, so much.
3. You're afraid you won't do it right, or you will fail.
4. You already feel too overworked or drained, and this is just one more thing to do.
5. You're too perpetually distracted to get through it, much less to start it.
6. It just isn't something you want to do.
7. You can't find the time.
8. You don't think you know all the answers yet.
9. You don't want to start until you know it will be perfect.

What's the one suggestion I can offer that addresses all these resistance points? The best solution to counter putting something off because it seems too big, or too much effort, or too confusing (or whichever one you relate to most), is to simply break it down into smaller pieces, and then start on one of the smaller pieces.

Yes, just start. And feel free to start anywhere. But start.

When I wrote *The Posing Playbook*, I felt every one of those resistance points. So my solution was to start in the middle. For some reason, I wanted to write the section that I knew would be in the middle. Instead of starting with an introduction, then wading through technical information that I wanted to share (but not then and there, exactly), I began with a more enjoyable part of the book. As I wrote, other ideas sparked, and I saved those for other parts of the *Playbook*.

The same approach works quite well for a business plan. Even though, chronologically, it starts with your Executive Summary, most experts would agree that you write that section last, when you have a better overall picture of what the summary will be because you've written the actual plan.

Research shows that most people highly overestimate the unpleasantness of the task on which they're procrastinating. One effective trick to overcoming this is allotting a short amount of time to just getting started. Set an alarm for a short, specified amount of time, say 15 minutes, and tackle a project for at least that amount of time. It's hard to argue with a 15-minute stab at a task I'm resisting. Sure enough, as soon as I get about 15 minutes in, I find the task easier than assumed, and I keep going—nearly always. But if I told myself I was going to block out the whole day to make it happen, I probably would have put that day off again and again.

Research shows that most people highly overestimate the unpleasantness of the task on which they're procrastinating.

Strategizing
YOUR
Identity and
BRANDING

"When you're running a small business, much of your brand identity is tied up in who you are..."

Another excellent reason to write a business plan is so you can take the time you need to figure out what you want to communicate about who you are, what your business does, and how people should perceive you. By better understanding the brand identity of your business, the better you'll be able to shape your clients' perception of it.

What is a brand identity? It's the words, colors, designs—all the elements of a brand—that helps clients distinguish your brand from other brands. Have you ever felt like you're lost in a sea of competing businesses? Chances are, you may not have put a significant amount of effort into identifying your individual brand, and why and how it should stand out in your market.

When you're running a small business, much of your brand identity is tied up in who you are, which isn't always something that people know, or certainly aren't able to explain in a succinct, short description. When asked, "Who are you?" as it relates to communicating that through a brand identity, the answer isn't about your profession ("I'm a photographer," or "I'm a graphic designer"), or about the roles you play ("I'm a father," or "I'm a wife"), or your address ("I'm a Texan"). When stripped of profes-sion, roles, geography, and associations, *who are you when these things change?* What are your skills, abilities, interests, talents, limits, or experiences? What is the succinct way you can define this composite of who you are?

Here are some questions you can ask yourself to start thinking about your brand identity in more detail:

1. What are you really, really, really good at—just quite naturally talented at? You may be greatly skilled at putting people at ease, or perhaps you love technology and pick it up quickly and effortlessly. Maybe you've always been drawn to tackling challenging situations. These strengths should be highlighted in your overall business identity.
2. What promises do you know you'll keep? Perhaps integrity is an inherent personality trait, just like integrity in service will be a strong marker of your brand identity.
3. What are your personal aesthetics? Do you like bright and clean, or are you drawn to dark and moody?
4. Are you a more casual or a more formal individual by nature? Are you drawn to traditional and elegant brands, or are you more interested in fresh and modern?

This effort to determine your authentic brand identity can play directly into how you set up your business to handle volume. If you find that you're slower, more thoughtful, and engaging, you may want to set up a business that does low volume and provides tailored services to a smaller client base. If you absolutely thrive in quick-moving environments and you find that you work best in fast bursts of energy, rapidly fired throughout the day, you may want to create a business that's based on a high volume of clients and repeated high-energy interactions.

There's an endless number of questions you can ask yourself here, but the goal is to create a short, succinct statement about your company's brand identity that you can showcase in all your visual communications and feed into your marketing efforts. This is a significant first step, determining your brand identity; if you dive right into marketing without doing this, how cohesive are the messages that you're communicating? If you don't know, it's probably because you don't have a distinct brand identity that you have thought through and included in your business plan.

The brand identity that you uniquely create for and around yourself is quite possibly the biggest advantage you have in a saturated market.

Building out a marketing plan is one of the most effective aspects of creating your business plan. In this day and age, every marketing plan should contain a dedicated focus to a business's online presence. It may seem incredibly obvious to state that your business should have a website, but there are many small business owners who still resist building a website, or perhaps build a bare bones site that doesn't consider the first impression a client may have when viewing the website. In today's competitive climate, it's simply no longer enough to say, "I gain referrals by word of mouth, so I don't need a website."

Consider this scenario: You're waiting in line to buy tickets at a movie theater, and the couple in front of you is raving about this amazing photographer and the incredible work he does. They say his name very clearly and distinctly, and your interest is piqued. Do you:

A. Write down the name, and then go home and look him up in the yellow pages?
B. Discover the photographer's studio address and drive by his studio to look at his work?
C. Google him and check out his website?

Of course, for the vast majority of potential clients, the answer is C. Building a clientele off of word of mouth is excellent, no doubt, but you must consider the next step that's taken after they hear about you. The next step is heading to your website to determine if they agree with the assessment they heard, or overheard.

How is your website designed? Is it built to showcase your work or to generate revenue? Is it designed to encourage bookings? Our studio's website has come a long way since its first incarnation in 2003. It used to be a site where you could see a whole lot of small images on a black background, with the oppor-

Creating
AN ONLINE
PRESENCE
Tied into
Smarter
MARKETING

> "The brand identity that you uniquely create for and around yourself is quite possibly the biggest advantage you have in a saturated market."

> "Most experts would agree that creating great content regularly—content that people want to share—is one of the most ideal ways to boost your SEO."

tunity to seek out an email address to contact the studio. Now tamaralackey.com is built with a clean and simple interface, even though it houses a great deal of content. There are large images and clear navigation, and every page and post is built for maximum SEO (search engine optimization). When nearly everyone is using the Internet to research a product or service, you want to be sure that your site will be in that search mix, and adhering to smart SEO is a big part of that.

Many small business owners address their SEO needs differently. There are a variety of options available to you. There is, of course, the do-it-yourself approach, and there are some very strong plug-ins on the market that will guide you through boosting your SEO on each page and post on your website and blog. The other option is to outsource the effort for a set maximum rate, where you determine how much you want to spend in total and let a service take care of it. Another option is to hire an SEO marketing company to manage your ongoing efforts for an initial fee and then a continuing monthly cost.

Most experts would agree that creating great content regularly—content that people want to share—is one of the most ideal ways to boost your SEO. What is great content? Well, as the old adage goes, you know it when you see it. But remember this very important factor: If the majority of the content you share is imagery, you need to know that search engines don't really recognize imagery, per se. What they do understand is the specific words that you use to identify the imagery you post to your website and blog: the title, any caption you use, those infamous alt-tags, and descriptions of the images.

Have you ever searched the Internet for one thing and found images of something else time and time again? Say, for instance, you searched for images of the tooth fairy, but you kept getting photographs of dentist offices. Chances are that someone some-

where included the phrase "tooth fairy" when describing their images or business practice. Search engines don't quite know what to do with images, but they are very good at knowing what to do with the descriptors surrounding them.

Finally, I suggest that your site is built with responsive Web design, which is an approach to create sites with optimal viewing experience on a variety of screens and mobile devices. This is a rather important factor nowadays, as the vast majority of Web users, estimated at more than 70%, are accessing sites via mobile devices first. Whether your website is being viewed on a 15" laptop, a 6" phone, or a 12" tablet, you want your client's initial, and subsequent impressions to be consistently strong.

Do you remember that brand identity you built to shape your clients' perception of your business through cohesive messaging and visual communications? Ensure that your online presence is designed around that look, feel, and messaging so that the words you use, the fonts and colors you choose, and the style of your overall design all coordinate.

It will undoubtedly take a lot of time and effort to build your business plan, brand identity, and online presence as it relates to marketing, but there are few things that are worthier of your time and effort if you're intent on building a business for the long haul. Best of luck! ■

ALL IMAGES BY TAMARA LACKEY

by desiGn

Erik Valind

SOCIAL MEDIA: JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Do you find yourself like the rest of us, losing hours every week, sucked into the void of your Facebook news feed? Does the sheer number of different social media platforms popping up every day overwhelm you? There is hope!

As photographers or visual creatives, social media gives us an unprecedented platform to share our work; to engage with fans, as well as potential clients; and to grow our brands. In this article, let's look at a couple of the largest and most influential avenues out there and discuss how best to use them, how to prep your work for sharing, and how to unify your message across platforms so those hours spent on the Internet pay off.

SOCIAL MEDIA EXPLAINED

This clear and concise way of explaining different social media sites started as a groundhog on a whiteboard at Three Ships, a digital marketing company. Needing to replace the groundhog since Groundhog Day was over, they decided to explain social media using donuts. Their creative director, Nuono Gomes, wrote out the text, and then their multimedia procuder, Doug Ray, posted it on Instagram. The analogy quickly took on a life of its own on the Internet, and soon people were using everything from coffee to cats to explain social media.

twitter
‹‹ I'm eating a donut ››

facebook.
‹‹ I like donuts ››

Instagram
‹‹ Here's a vintage photo of my donut ››

Pinterest
‹‹ Here's a pretty donut recipe ››

foursquare
‹‹ This where I eat donuts ››

Linked in
‹‹ My skills include donut eating ››

You Tube
‹‹ Here's a video of me eating a donut ››

IMAGES COURTESY OF THEIR RESPECTIVE OWNERS

WHERE TO INVEST YOUR TIME

So we're not overwhelmed with all the options or latest buzz-worthy social media platforms, let's start with the big dogs in this arena: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. All of these websites have monthly active user counts (MAUs) in the *hundreds of millions*, and Facebook alone has more than *one billion* users on its website every month. Quite the potential audience, huh? Each one of these sites varies a little in the types of users they attract and how they're used for communication. Here's a quick breakdown:

Facebook: The social network website that everyone's on. The goal is to initiate conversation by easily sharing things that you like, be they status updates, website links, photos, or video.

Twitter: Microblogging site that caps your post at 140 characters and embedded photos. This is a great platform to share brief status updates or links to more in-depth posts on your Facebook, blog, or website.

LinkedIn: Business-oriented social media website. A digital CV/résumé with a social element. Less of a diary of what you ate for lunch and more of a place to share business contacts, referrals, and your qualifications.

Instagram: Smartphone app based on sharing photos and short video clips. One of the first and largest photo apps to embrace social interaction and build a community beyond just pretty pictures. It's now owned by Facebook and has a website version, as well.

WHERE TO BEGIN? YOUR PROFILE!

You're the cornerstone of all of these networks, so you'll have to set up a profile so people know with whom they're getting social. You'll need at least three things to get started: name, photo, and bio. Start by using your real name. If you're a photographer or artist, you want people to find you and your work; that's why you're creating a social media presence and sharing in the first place, right?

Next, your profile photo, or avatar, should be a current photo of you. You want people to recognize you and eventually your message and imagery. Try to avoid those cropped-in party snapshots from five years ago, or random graphics. Social media has opened up a whole new reason for *everyone* to get a professional headshot.

> "You'll need at least three things to get started: name, photo, and bio."

Finally, your bio on these websites is like an elevator pitch for who you are. Let them see your personality here, but keep it short and sweet. State who you are, what you do, and why they should follow or interact with you.

A UNIFIED FRONT: KEEPING YOUR BRAND CONSISTENT

Chances are you'll be using more than one social media website, so the key to being successful across multiple platforms is uniformity. The reason for uniformity is twofold: making yourself easily recognizable from one site to the other, and making it easier for you to share across multiple accounts.

While you want your work to be seen by as many people as possible, your audience may only be using one or two social media channels. So you want to be easily identifiable if they look for you elsewhere. If fans or potential clients have been following you on Facebook for a while, then they open a new Instagram account and start looking for photo streams to follow, they'll instantly recognize you if you have the same avatar and bio on both sites. It also makes it easier to share and be shared across multiple platforms.
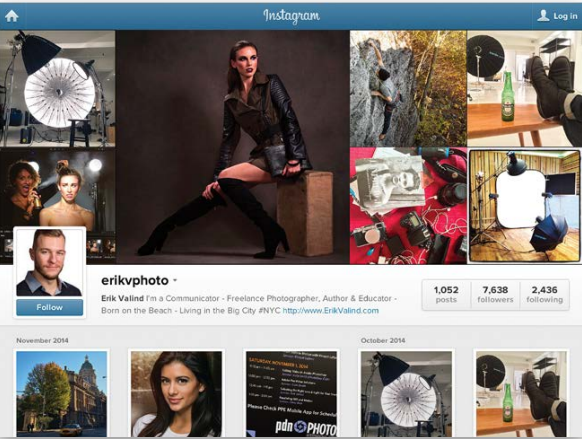
Using the same avatar and bio on all your social media sites is key for potential customers and fans to instantly recognize you and your work.

Some websites will also have you set up a username or handle. Try to pick a unique handle so you can secure the same handle across multiple social media sites. On Twitter and Instagram my name is Erik Valind but my handle is @ErikVPhoto on both. Sharing is a main ingredient in social media, so when I post a photo to Instagram, I don't want it to end there. From the Instagram app, I can also share that photo directly to Twitter. Because my username is the same on both platforms, the photo already has the correct @ErikVPhoto handle tag, and when someone retweets my photo, people can easily follow it back to my account and follow me. Likewise, if my Twitter followers like the pictures I share on Twitter, they can go straight to the source by following me on Instagram and engaging there, as well. Uniformity across accounts makes you easy to find, follow, and share.

A CONSISTENT MESSAGE AND YOUR VOICE

Uniformity extends beyond your username and profile, too. It's paramount that your message be the same across the board, as well. Pick a theme or a specialty and stick to it. People want to know what to expect when they follow you. If you talk about photography one day, astronomy the next, and home improvements in-between, you're sending mixed signals. As a photographer, I talk about photography, I share my photos online, and I discuss the photo industry. That is the theme of my social media.

Find your theme and stick to it, then let your style and personality blossom within that theme. Bonus points for personality. When people see that you're a person and not a faceless brand, they'll be more likely to join in the conversation. Be sure to keep it positive and upbeat. You don't want to be that gloomy guy online. And remember not to get too personal; the Internet is forever, and some things are better kept to yourself.

GOALS WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

Now that you're set up and optimized to share and be shared, what are you trying to communicate? What are your goals? The phrase, "Plan your work and work your plan" rings especially true in social media. Without clear intentions, social media can quickly become a time sink full of inane ramblings and funny cat videos. As photographers or creatives, we ultimately want to share our work and grow our audience of fans and potential clients.

Every one of us should have a website or blog where we showcase our work, so one great goal is to funnel people from our social media accounts to this main page. Share snippets of a blog post or behind-the-scenes photos of a shoot, and tell people that they can find out more on your website. The key is giving them an incentive to visit you there.

Social media is also a great opportunity to grow your brand, or more specifically to show people who you are

and what you do well. Showcase your expertise in a given field, be helpful when followers are looking for info, or just be funny or pleasant. Do something that makes you unique, and give people a reason to be your friend or follower online.

Many people post a ton of content right out of the gate, then get discouraged when they don't receive a lot of Likes or new Followers. No matter what your goal is, social media is about being social. When you first start, find other people and pages that you like or admire. Take note of what they're posting, how often they're posting, and then start engaging them. Comment on people's posts and don't be shy to follow a bunch of people on day one. You truly get out what you put in. Here's a 33% rule that I follow to make sure that it's not all me, me, me.

- Promote your work and website 33% of the time
- Promote other people and initiate conversation 33% of the time
- Promote industry-related information and education 33% of the time

PREP YOUR IMAGES FOR SHARING

You should now have a good idea of when and where you're going to share, so let's get some pretty pictures ready to go with all those posts and updates. After all the time that goes into creating a great photograph you don't want to have it displayed poorly when shared online, or not displayed at all. To avoid these common mistakes, let's walk through optimizing your images for the Web, focusing on image resolution, size, and color balance. This will ensure that your images look great onscreen and load in a timely manner. Once you you've finished editing your image in Photoshop, simply follow these steps to export it properly.

Step One: Choose File>Save for Web.
Step Two: Resize the image to 600–900 px on the longest side.
Step Three: Verify the image is JPEG and around 200 KB or less.
Step Four: Check the box Convert to sRGB.
Step Five: Click Done.

The final JPEG image file is supported on all social media websites, will load quickly, and will have the proper color and contrast no matter which Web browser people view it on.

Optimized image specs: 72-ppi resolution, 600–900 pixels on the longest side, less than 200 KB file size, and sRGB color space embedded

BEST PRACTICES

Follow these best practices to make sure your posts are getting as much traction as possible.

Instagram: Hashtags are a way of keywording a post or picture. They are simply the # symbol followed by a word with no space in between. It's a great way to discover photos and posts about specific topics and themes. If I post a photo of a sunset to Instagram, only my followers will see it. But if I post the photo and type the hashtag #sunset in the caption, then anyone searching for #sunset can find the photo whether they follow me or not. This is a great way to get new followers.
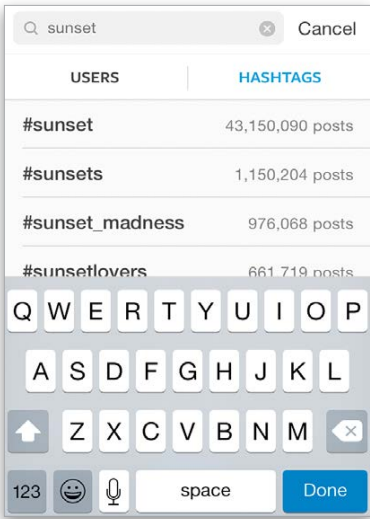
Twitter: The difference between a Mention and a Post:

A. @KelbyOne is a great educational resource for photographers!

B. .@KelbyOne is a great educational resource for photographers!
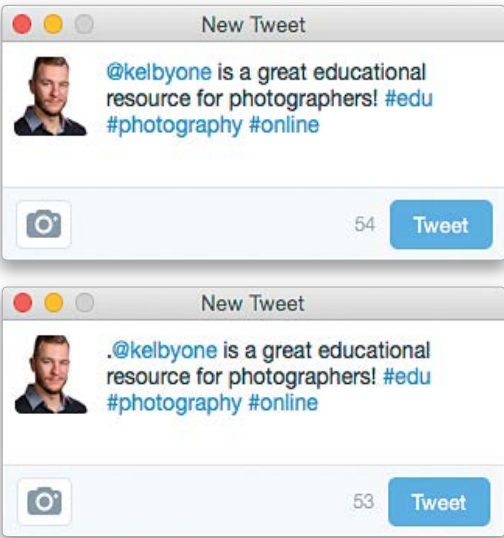
Tweet A began with a Twitter handle and will only be seen by KelbyOne, which doesn't benefit my followers. To correct this, I began Tweet B with a period (any character or letter will work) so it will be seen by every one of my followers as I intended.

Facebook: It's becoming more and more difficult for your content to be seen on a crowded website like Facebook. To make sure the Facebook gods place you above the noise, create dynamic posts. When you post photos and video, tag other people and pages in your post, and use the location tag and any hot links and hashtags that are applicable. Tags make names clickable and bring people to their profiles. Simply type the @ symbol followed by the username of the person you want to tag or directly mention.
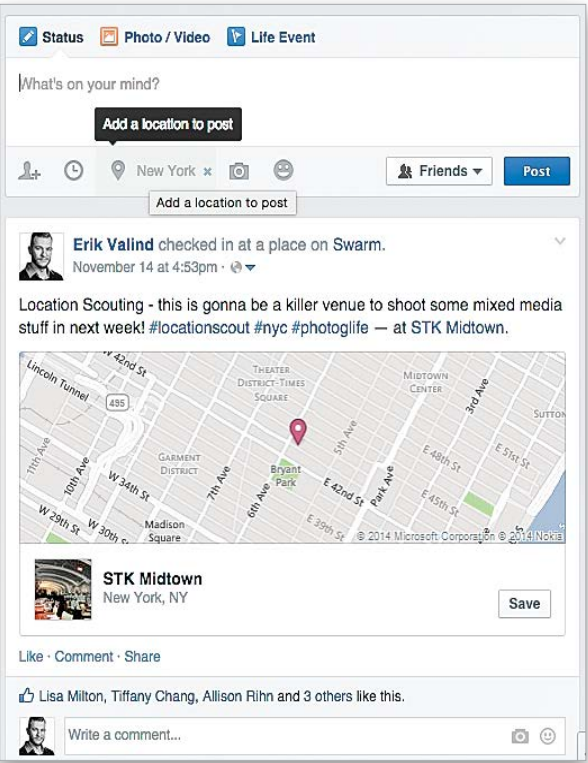
LinkedIn: Rather than tooting your own horn, let happy clients and colleagues do it for you. You can request recommendations and have people vouch for your various skill sets. There's no better advertising than a direct referral.

The social media flavor of the week changes constantly, so make sure to explore other online communities, too. You'll definitely want to look into Flickr and 500px, which are specifically photo sharing websites but have sprouted huge communities of their own. No matter where you go, remember to stay positive, share what you love, and engage—after all, social media isn't social if it's just a one-way street. See you online! ■

ALL IMAGES BY ERIK VALIND

set yourself

apart 📷 from the competition

by frank salas

Is setting yourself apart from the competition really about taking the best photos, having the lowest prices, or using the latest camera gear?

This is always on the minds of most photographic entrepreneurs. Whether you're a full-time or part-time photographer, or seriously considering making a career in photography, you think differently when 100% of your income is derived from taking photos. Don't get me wrong, we all love the latest camera gear; however, the real question is how can we set ourselves apart in this heavily saturated world of photography? Below are some quick tips for keeping yourself ahead of your competition.

prospective client contact and follow-up

This tip has to be my all-time favorite. How often do you hear people say they contacted a business either by phone or email and no one got back to them until a week later, or not at all? Yep, it happens all the time! This is where you can take the upper hand. Every time I receive an inquiry, especially by email, I respond within minutes if it's during our normal business hours and I'm not with another client at that moment. Even if it's after hours, I tend to get back to them the same day. I also follow up the next business day with a phone call to see if they received my information and if they have any immediate questions I can answer for them. Many think of it as bugging or soliciting the potential client; however, remember that they're trying to reach you and appreciate your quick and personal response.

is it really about the best prices?

Offering clients the lowest rates never guarantees they will purchase your goods or services. Instead, offer them the best value. For wedding photography packages, add additional coverage, a couple extra album pages, an extra enlargement for the parents, or maybe even offer them thank-you cards for their guests. The point is to not worry about giving them the best or lowest price, but to add value with some type of low-cost product.

your website

How does your website look? More precisely, what message are you sending to prospective clients when they browse your website? For example, if you're a portrait photographer, are you showing only a dozen family portraits and then the rest of your portfolio is a mixture of travel or street photography? If you're a wedding photographer, the same thing applies. What message do consumers get when they look at your online portfolios? Do you come across as an expert in your field?

There are two points here: Display fewer images so you're only showing your best work, and focus on the area of photography that you want to photograph. On my website, I concentrate on showing wedding photography and engagement portraits. Yes, I love all of types of photography, but I want a prospective client to see me as an expert in my field and not a jack-of-all-trades. By simply applying this technique, it has helped me edge out other competitors who do it all.

I see many websites that look the same. How will you stand out if your website has the look and style of other photographers? Be different and look outside the photography world in other industries for inspiration. Ask yourself, "How can I make my website different than my competitors?"

create a photographic style that stands out

At a certain point, most photographers think creating the best photos will give them the upper hand over the competition. I'm all about educating yourself and learning the fundamentals of photography (lighting, posing, and retouching techniques) and new techniques to advance yourself to improve your craft, but it's more important to create a style or a body of work that has a signature look. It could be images with high color saturation, or maybe a monochrome look. It could be your work has a more relaxed style of photography versus an elegant and formally posed approach. Whatever you do, keep it consistent. We all love our favorite Lightroom presets and Photoshop plug-ins, but don't overdo it. When people click through your portfolio, do they see that you have a consistent style and look, or do they see that you're trying out all of your favorite filters and each image has a different touch or effect? If the answer is filters and effects, that's not good.

Create a series of images that look uniform so when prospective clients view your body of work they can quickly see your style.

network in person

This is an area that many of photographers shy away from or perhaps they've tried it once a year and gave up. Do you ever hear people say that others are successful because of who they know? Well, I'm here to tell you that without knowing people it's hard to get the word out about how awesome you are. For example, as wedding photographers, we're out networking with wedding planners, wedding venues, and other vendors that to-be brides and grooms visit. The competitive advantage here is that you're unique and there's a good chance that you will stand out by introducing yourself to new people. Your competitors are doing the same thing, so why shouldn't you be there side by side to show what you have to offer.

On that same note, consistency is key. Every month, go to some type of meeting or mixer. It can be an open house for a new reception location, a florist having a grand opening, or the local wedding magazine having their annual event. Make sure you mingle, shake hands, and say hello because your competitors might stay away because they feel it's a waste of time to meet and greet new faces.

social network online

We just touched on the physical, in-person approach to getting noticed, so now let's discuss the online method that most of us prefer to do. Our blogs were one of the main sources of online communication, but now we keep up with each other on a daily basis on Facebook and Instagram. It might seem like it's not worth the effort you put in, but the question is, are there any immediate or long-term returns?

I add both my clients and the wedding vendors I want to work with to my Friends list. I don't use my social networking sources for keeping up with friends. I mainly concentrate on my professional relationships, so the posts I make are related to that. After every event or photo session, I immediately post an image and tag the clients so that everyone on their network can see the image. Doing this the same day or the next day is the key, especially after a wedding. If you don't do this, you'll see all of the images the couple's friends have posted before you, getting all the attention, even though their iPad or iPhone photos aren't great. This is certainly nothing new, but how many of you are taking the time and doing it? One last tip: Make them a Facebook Timeline cover. I always email a collage of photos with my logo that they can use as their main Facebook Timeline cover.

sell a product

If you're among those who only shoot and burn a photo session and are wondering why you can't get top dollar for your time and talent, here's why: Consumers like value, as we mentioned before. Sure, it sounds great to just take their photos, and the thought of them making their own prints even sounds better. Or does it?

How much can you charge and is that rate a good enough reason for them to hire you over your competitors? My solution is to sell prints, albums, and a product. You must first invest in sample albums, enlargements, and any other products you think will get people excited to hire you instead of the photographer who only wants to offer a $0.15 DVD with his or her images. You're inspiring them with your beautiful images, and you're educating them on how to display and share those images with family and friends.

My biggest sellers are albums. The current norm is to create hundreds of images during a session, but how are clients able to keep and show all of your amazing work when the only option in their mind is, "Can you burn them on a DVD for me?"

Finally, look and act professional. We've all heard the saying "dress for success." Position yourself like the people you want to attract. First impressions are everything. I'm not suggesting you wear a suit, but keep in mind they're comparing you to other photographers and you're the one they will introduce to their families and friends at their once-in-a-lifetime event. Be kind and courteous to all and simply keep smiling. ∎
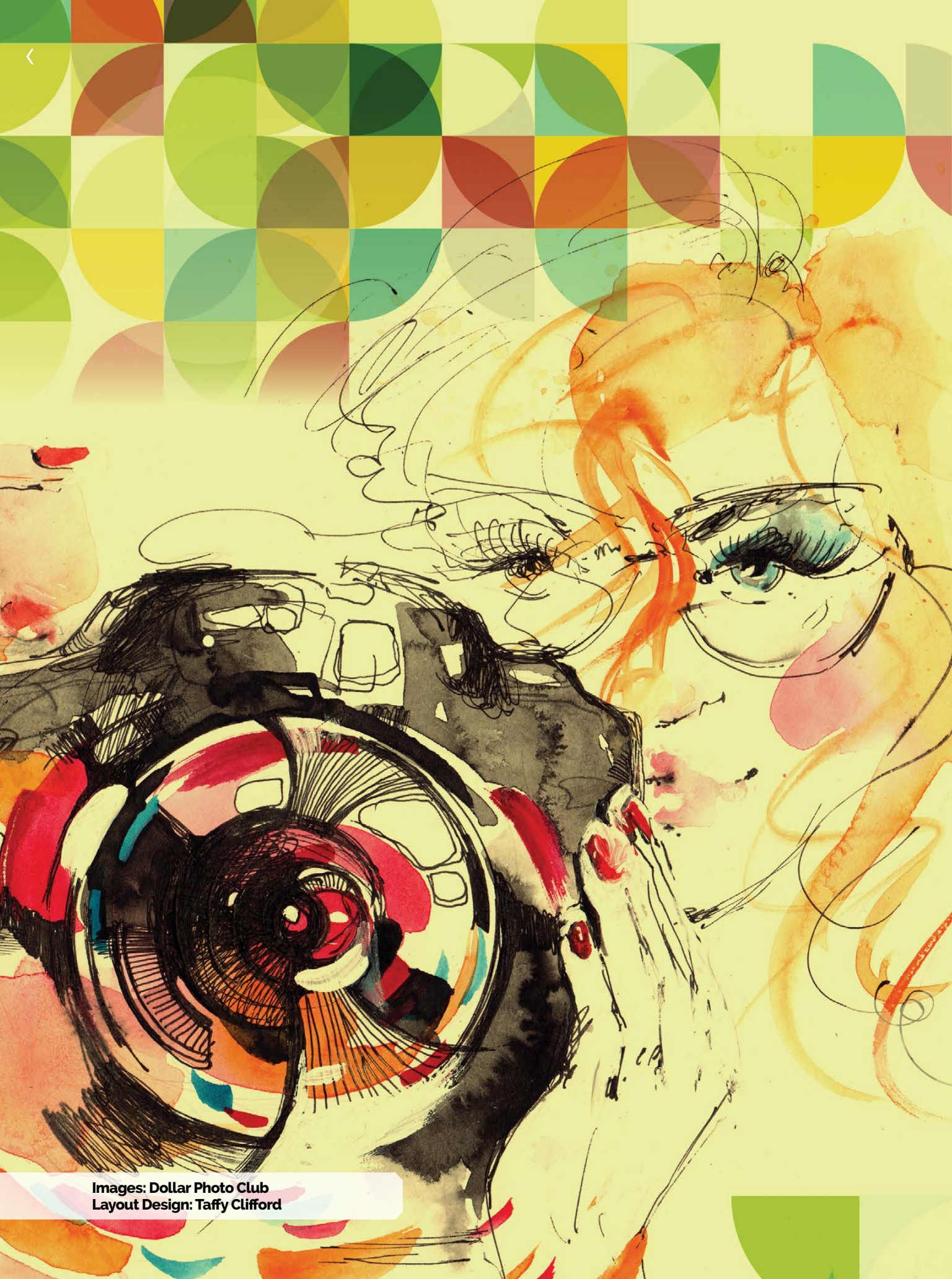
ALL IMAGES BY FRANK SALAS EXCEPT WHERE NOTED

Frank Salas Photography

Managing Photo Shoots:

Interview with Lynn DelMastro

By Rafael 'RC' Concepcion

Lynn DelMastro is the studio manager and producer for Joe McNally. We sat down with Lynn and asked her a series of questions about possible scenarios a photographer might face with a job. Beginning freelance photographers often don't see past the job at details that can affect how they charge clients, how much time is involved in the process, or how to cover themselves in the event of a problem.

RC: Lynn, thanks so much for taking the time to talk with us about some photography scenarios. I think this conversation will be useful for up-and-coming photographers. Let's begin with a product photography scenario.

A client has developed a brand-new case for tablet computers and they want pictures of the case so they can use it on their blog. This product will likely be sold in big box stores and online. They want to shoot the product in an office with company employees holding it and using it. They would like to do this as a half-day shoot.

LYNN: The client has intentionally attempted to lower the costs involved in doing this shoot by mentioning "half day." While that might seem cost-efficient to them, to me it doesn't necessarily indicate a cost savings. I don't believe in calculating fees based on a half day. One of a few exceptions is if you're a freelance newspaper photographer and sent out on multiple assignments per day. But for all other photographers, to take on even a single assignment on any given day means you typically can't take any other job for that day. You could book a half day

with Client A, and then Client B calls and needs you for a full day. You have to turn Client B down and lose that revenue. Also, just because the client says it's a half-day shoot doesn't mean you only work when you're shooting. You have to prep, pack (unless your assistant does that, in which case that's a billable expense item), drive to location, set up, shoot, strike the set (even if it's minimal), and drive back to your studio. Not exactly a half day, is it?

Whenever a client asks you what your day rate is, I recommend replying, "What type of licensing do you want for the photos?" Here's another example of dispensing of the day-rate notion (no matter how short the day is) and basing your fee on the requested licensing. The license is determined in two ways: the term and the usage. The term is the length of time the images will be used, and the usage is the media in which they will be used. The client in the example given here has stated that they only want the photos for their blog. Providing they don't expand on that usage, I would categorize this as electronic (blog only) marketing and promotion.

Next up, you need to discuss the term. Many clients will say that they want the images forever, or

"in perpetuity." I always politely question a client who requests this because why would they want the images forever? Especially technology-based photos, as the products in the images become dated so quickly. I generally recommend a term of three to five years.

It's important to note that I still hear people use the term "buyout." This makes me crazy because no photographer should enter into this arrangement. For those of you who aren't aware, this means transfer of copyright, a.k.a. work made for hire. Why on earth would the client need your copyright? (On the other hand, happily sell it to them if they're willing to buy it from you for a yacht load of money.) Granted, there are exceptions to every rule, but choose your exceptions wisely. Once you turn that copyright over, you technically can't use those images in your portfolio or for your own promotion. You no longer own those images. They are the property of the new owners. If you want to use them, you need to ask their permission.

Now that you have the term and usage rights understood, you can name your fee. Next up are the production expenses. For the example given here, the client specified that the shoot would take place at their office. Whenever possible, I recommend scouting the location ahead of time. This will alleviate some of the stress on the day of the primary shoot since you can plan your lighting accordingly. If you do the scout yourself, be sure to build that time into your overall shoot fee. Or, if you send an assistant, build that fee into the production expenses.

Since this client said that there will be company employees in the photos, you don't need to build model fees into your expenses; however, make sure everyone signs a release. I strongly recommend including the services of a hair and makeup stylist, as well as a wardrobe consultant, into your production expenses. For a shoot like this, the consultant will speak with the photo subjects ahead of time to ensure that all wardrobe is coordinated. If the client won't spend for any consulting, including hair and makeup, then be sure to have a disclaimer in the notes of your estimate that say that the photographer is not responsible for the grooming of the photo subjects. Great lighting can only go so far to make someone look good. Your client will be much happier to see everyone looking their best when a professional has groomed them. The photo subjects themselves will feel more confident and that will come across in your images.

All other expenses will be based on your own business model. For a shoot like this, I recommend charging either mileage or a one-day vehicle rental to transport your gear, one or two photo assistants (pack and shoot), breakfast and lunch per diems for crew, and the grooming services noted above.

On a whole other note, there's the digital capture line item. There's capture for the shoot, then there's the postprocessing and editing time you'll be spending back at the studio. This all needs to be built into the budget. If not, you'll be chipping away at your shoot fee.

RC: For a corporate shoot, the client would like to do a series of images of members of their team, five total. These photos will go into use on a website, but the company thought that they might use them for other purposes down the line.

They would like headshots of the team, then portraits of them working in the office. The client states that available light will be fine as it's usually a bright, sunny office, and they think a half day of time would be fine.

LYNN: Much of the same information, as I noted with the product shoot, applies here. Regarding the client's notion that due to the bright, sunny office, doing the shoot with available light will be fine. How nice of them to offer that technical advice! With all due respect, clearly, you don't go by that. Also, who's to say that on the day of the shoot it isn't a cloudy, miserable day? Plan accordingly either way. As far as the shoot fee, the license they want right now is website. I'd get as much fee up front for as much additional usage as possible. That will save everyone the trouble of negotiating this

down the road. I'd offer a three-tier package of usage, from Web only to annual reports, marketing, and promotion. Make the sliding fee scale very appealing to them, where the fee for most extensive licensing shows the benefit to buy it now.

RC: Let's say you're doing an editorial shoot for a magazine that would like to do a feature article and portrait of Jane Smith. She's the founder of a new set of toys that promotes research skills for children. This is the hot toy of the holiday season and they're looking for an angle to show how a person built a business in a garage and is now selling products in big box stores. The images are on a deadline, so you have three weeks (or some unreasonable amount of time that constitutes a rush) to get it done.

LYNN: Editorial shoots are a great way to show off your journalistic ability to tell a story. The amount of coverage the editor is asking for will determine if you only have to shoot one or two portraits, or a series of images that truly captures the essence of the company's growth. Here again, expenses are separate from the fee. Expenses would be dependent upon the editor's willingness to budget for travel, assistants, meals, etc., everything that goes along with doing complete coverage (unless the shoot is in your locale).

Fees with magazines are often a base fee against space. If you get a lot of real estate in the magazine, they'll calculate the space of the images against the base fee they paid you. Anything above that constitutes an additional fee. Word to the wise: Be careful with magazines and work for hire agreements. They're notorious for wanting the copyright to your images. Ask them up front if they have a photography agreement that you'll need to sign. Review that before you commit to the assignment. Sometimes there's flexibility within the agreement to revise some terms, but get it all out in the open from the start. ■

STUDIO EFFICIENCY ///

by Kevin Ames

oogle defines a studio as "a room where an artist, photographer, sculptor, etc., works." Traditionally, this has meant a physical location usually with a cycloramic wall, prop storage, digital-editing suite (or a darkroom back in the days of film), reception area, changing room, make-up station, kitchen, conference space, administrative office, and gear storage.

Today, a studio is anywhere a photographer works, from the traditional to a home shooting area, on location, at a client's business, or in the case of portraits, the client's home. Wedding photographers' studios are often churches or event spaces. Absent a physical studio where photographs are made, there has to be a place for retouching, archiving, and financial administration. It can be a home office or even a coffee shop for that matter.

No matter what physical form a studio takes, it's a place of business that faces the same challenges as any other business. One of the keys to running a better business is efficiency. As a photographer, you have many responsibilities that extend beyond shooting images, so finding ways to streamline tasks and knowing when to hire additional help will make you more productive and increase your earning potential.

MAKING PHOTOGRAPHS

As much as we'd love to shoot every day, the harsh reality is that we do that only about 10% of the time. The other 90% includes propping, getting wardrobe, location scouting, packing gear, hiring assistants and make-up artists, and making sure that everything is in place to assure a successful photography session.

The six "Ps" that say it all are: Prior Proper Planning Permits Perfect Photography. The most important P is "Permits." Planning doesn't guarantee that everything will work out; it merely increases the odds. Remember, whatever can go wrong will do so at the worst possible time, causing the most harm. That's Murphy's Law. Murphy loves photo shoots.

We also spend a lot of our time getting the work, in postproduction, archiving, making prints or having them made at a lab, and invoicing, not to mention administrative tasks such as paying bills, taxes, and balancing the checkbook.

POSTPRODUCTION

This is probably the biggest time commitment in the photography studio today. Film shooters had the luxury, and the expense, of having their lab do most of the work. Today, that work falls on the photographer. By breaking post into its components, it's possible to see where hiring help might, well, help.

At bare minimum, the photographer has to import the photos from memory cards, unless it's a tethered shoot. A fast USB 3 card reader for both CF and SD formats will help. The best investment, though, is a really fast computer. A fast, multithreaded machine maxed out with RAM and sporting lots of cores will pay for itself in the time saved in importing and editing your images. These workhorses can cost up to $10,000, but by getting the photographer back to booking, planning, and executing a photographic project for a client, it more than pays for itself.

After import, the best photos have to be chosen. This is the most difficult task for most of us because, frankly, photographers are the worst possible editors of their own work. We become emotionally involved. Trust me on this, we all mark the hardest-to-produce images as selects, even if they're not worthy of making the cut. Our clients will recognize all the hard effort made to produce those images, won't they? (Here comes a harsh dose of reality.) No, they won't. Clients only care that the photographs you make for them tell their stories. Period. (Darn it, right?)

Consider getting help in making selects. One of the ways to become a better editor is by editing someone else's work. Get with a photographer you respect and who respects you. Tell him what your assignment was and have him pick his favorites, then ask him to explain why he picked the ones he did. Do the same for a project of his. You both will become better at editing you own work.

Color Correction and Exposure Adjustments

This time-consuming task can be streamlined very easily with a little extra time spent during the photo shoot by capturing an X-Rite ColorChecker Passport in one of the images. This pocket-sized color reference chart is a one-click color balance tool, as well as a way to get really close and consistent exposures. Using it is easy. Either have the subject hold the open Passport toward the main light on the subject while you take a photo, or hold it yourself and capture an image. This reference image can be used in Lightroom or Camera Raw to quickly set the color balance and fine-tune the exposure for *all* of the images in that light (see *Photoshop User*, December 2014, p. 94 for more on correcting white balance and exposure). A photographer who works consistently with a reference like the ColorChecker Passport can have an assistant handle the color correction and exposure tweaks without supervision.
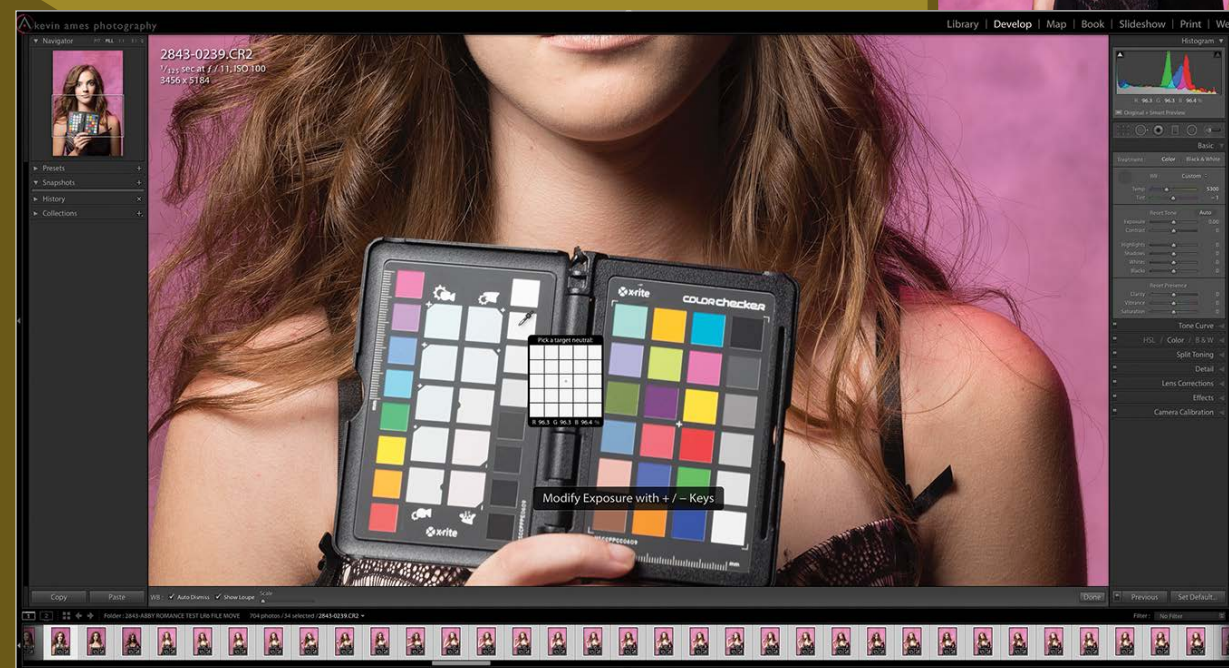
Finish vs. Fix

No matter how great everything happens on set, be it on location or in a studio, there's always some post required to polish the image. Notice that I said "polish," not "fix." A photographer that doesn't get images as correct as possible in camera is one that's spending too much of her most valuable and limited resource, time, to make up for not bringing her best game to the time spent behind the camera. Lightroom and Photoshop are finishing tools, not fix-it tools. If you catch yourself saying these fatal words, "Don't worry, I'll fix it in Photoshop," take a step back and see if it wouldn't be easier to, say, remove distracting objects before taking the shot rather than having to clone them out later in post.

DELIVERABLES AND ARCHIVING

Once the selects have been made and edited, the deliverables are next. They're what the client receives. A wedding photographer might create a printed album, the portraitist might make a canvas wrap print, and the commercial shooter might deliver high-resolution retouched files for a brochure or annual report along with lower-resolution files for the client's website and email blasts. Will the physical prints be shipped, couriered, or delivered in person to the client? Are digital files to be sent on CD or DVD, or uploaded to an FTP server? These are questions that must be asked before the photography happens so the time for producing the deliverables can be factored into the cost.

What happens to the photographs after they're delivered to the client? Do they get thrown away, or are they archived for future sales or use on the photographer's website and blog? How much time does archiving take? What does it cost? Where does the cost factor into the price of the shoot? A strong double backed-up archive is a valuable resource for the photographer. Making certain that backups are completed nightly could be part of a studio manager's duties.

ADMINISTRATION AND EMPLOYEES

Face it, no business runs without paperwork, or at least its digital equivalent. The photographer (a.k.a. studio owner) must network; show her work; update her website continuously; prepare and revise estimates; book studio time or location or both; rent equipment; hire assistants, stylists, and talent; make sure model and property releases are signed; shoot then bill the job; collect the money; deposit it; pay the team and the day-to-day bills; taxes; and so forth. Notice that only shooting the job is a nonadministrative task. At bare minimum, a part-time bookkeeper is essential.

Employees are expensive. Here's an absolute truth: If a person working for a studio doesn't generate *at least* two times more income than his or her salary, then he or she isn't worth hiring. Don't misunderstand me; the staffer doesn't have to personally generate that income. A staff member who frees the studio owner's time to the point where more jobs can be accepted and accomplished to produce that 2x multiplier of his or her wages is truly valuable.

The modern-day studio finds the photographer wearing all of the hats listed above. Good, no, great time-management skills are the key to making it all work. Photography is one of the last unregulated professions where anyone can open a studio for the price of a business license. What sets the true professional apart from the rest is the attention to details of not only the shoot but to the *business*, as well. A synonym for studio might be "business." ∎

ALL IMAGES BY KEVIN AMES

Under the Loupe

extending the power of export

BY ROB SYLVAN

Creating copies of your finished work is probably the main reason your photos go into Lightroom in the first place. This issue, you'll learn how to expand the export options in Lightroom to help you do more in less time.

Output is such a huge part of Lightroom that it has four separate modules—Book, Slideshow, Print, and Web—devoted entirely to getting photos out in one form or another. There are also a growing number of publish service options. Finally, there's the tried-and-true Export dialog. The Export dialog is the real unsung hero of Lightroom, and it's probably one of the functions you use the most. As powerful as the Export dialog is, there are a number of ways you can expand its capabilities even further, and in so doing make your workflow more efficient. I want to share some of the ways I've turbocharged my exports through the use of third-party export plug-ins (some free and some donationware).

lightroom plug-in manager

All of the plug-ins I'm going to cover are installed using the same process and can be managed through the Lightroom Plug-in Manager. Let's walk through the basics of where you can find these plug-ins, how to install them, how to remove them, and then how you can use some of them.

To access the Plug-in Manager, go to File>Plug-in Manager. You'll see that you already have a few plug-ins installed that come with Lightroom. At the bottom left of the Plug-in Manager is a button that takes you to the Plug-in Exchange where you can try (and buy) many different types of add-ons for Lightroom and other Adobe products. There are some useful ones there to check out, but my go-to plug-ins can all be found over at the Photographer's Toolbox (www.photographers-toolbox.com). No matter where you get your plug-ins, here are the steps for installation:

step one: If you're in the Plug-in Manager, click Done to exit. Download the file to your computer and unzip it to access the plug-in file, which will have an LRPLUGIN file extension.

step two: Place a copy of that LRPLUGIN file in a folder of your choosing. A good tip I picked up from John Beardsworth at www.lightroomsolutions.com is to store files in a Dropbox folder so that they're accessible on multiple computers. All that matters is that you know where this folder is located.

step three: Open the Plug-in Manager, click the Add button, and navigate to the LRPLUGIN file. Click the Add Plug-in button to add it to the manager.

All of the plug-ins I'll mention have a free trial version available (or are simply free), and the full version only requires a donation in any amount of your choosing (an amazing deal). After adding the plug-in to the manager, you'll see if it has any special configuration requirements or a place to add the serial number for the full version. On the left is a green light next to the plug-in's name that indicates it's installed and running. That's all there is to it. To remove a plug-in added in this way, click the Remove button in the Plug-in Manager. Removing from the manager doesn't delete the LRPLUGIN file, so you'll need to do that manually outside of Lightroom.

making exports zippy

I deliver files in compressed ZIP format all the time. It's such an easy and universally useable format for sending files in a neat package that it has become habit for me. There's a cool plug-in at the Photographer's Toolbox called Zip Exporter that allows you to compress your photos into a ZIP file right in the Export dialog. You can even (optionally) configure the plug-in to upload that ZIP file to an FTP server as part of the process. The most common way I use it is to export the ZIP file to a folder in my Dropbox account, and then I can easily send a link to that ZIP file via an email.

Begin by selecting the photos you'd like to export, then click the Export button at the bottom left of the Library module. In the Export dialog, choose Zip Exporter from
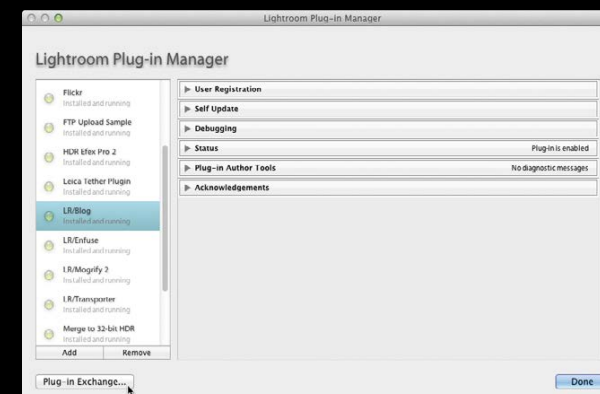
the Export To drop-down menu to access the panels for this plug-in. The only new panel provided by this plug-in is the one on the top named Zip Exporter. This is where you choose the location for this ZIP file to be created. I chose a Dropbox folder, but it's entirely up to you. Once you've chosen the location, all you need to do is enter a name for the ZIP file itself before configuring the remaining panels based on your export needs for file type, size, color space, etc., as you would for any export. Once configured the way you want it, I highly recommend that you click the Add button under the Preset window to save those settings as an export preset, which is a huge time saver for any repetitive type of export you may have.
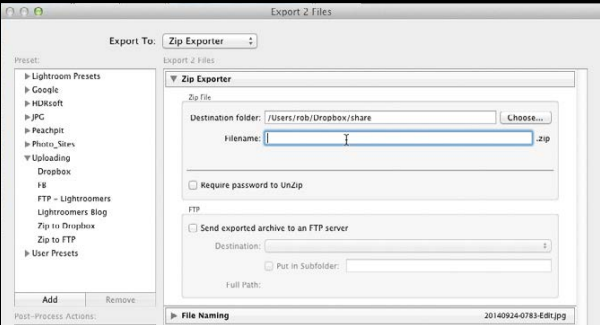
An additional option some of you may find helpful is the ability to also send this file to an FTP server. I've done this to make downloads available from my website and have a separate export preset for those times. The only difference here is that you need to have access to an FTP server and you need to know the username and password. Armed with that information, check the Send Exported Archive to an FTP Server box, then click the Destination drop-down menu, and select Edit to enter your FTP credentials (consult your Web host if you're not sure). If you've set up the Web module to
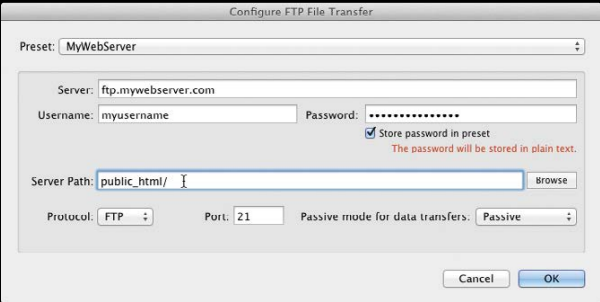

upload to your website, this will look familiar. If not, you simply enter your information and click OK (though it's smart to click the Preset drop-down to save your settings for reuse). Now you can configure the remaining panels and have that ZIP file uploaded to an FTP as part of the bargain.

ftp for free

Speaking of FTP, there are other times when I need to upload a series of photos to my FTP server without compressing them into a ZIP file, and it just so happens that Adobe has a free FTP export plug-in you can grab for that purpose. This plug-in is packaged (buried) in the Lightroom Developer Center as part of the software developer's kit (SDK). Head over to www.adobe.com/devnet/photoshoplightroom.html and click the link for the Lightroom 5 SDK. At the bottom of the license agreement page, click the Agree and Download Adobe Photoshop Lightroom 5 SDK link, then unzip the contents. The folder we want is named ftp_upload.lrdevplugin, located in the Sample Plugins folder. Copy that folder to where your other plug-ins are stored, add it via the Plug-in Manager, and click Done. I changed the file extension to LRPLUGIN first (you can do this in Finder or Windows Explorer), but the LRDEVPLUGIN extension should work, too.

Once added to the Plug-in Manager, select the photos you'd like to upload and click the Export button. In the Export dialog, choose FTP Upload from the Export To drop-down menu. The only new panel you'll see is FTP Server down at the bottom of the Export dialog. Click the Destination drop-down menu, choose Edit, then enter your FTP server information in the Configure FTP File Transfer dialog (it works the same as the FTP destination I just mentioned before). Now you're ready to go.
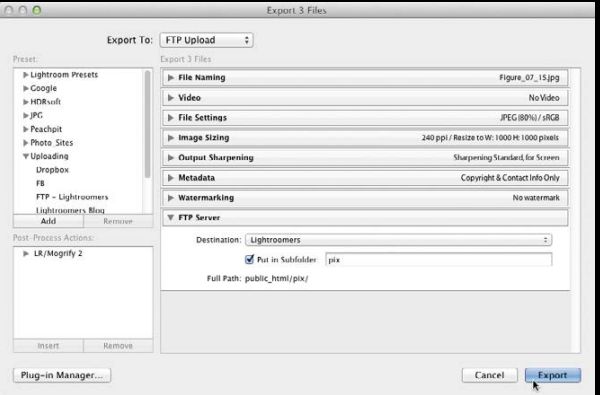

lr/blog

The last plug-in I'll highlight gives you the power to create a blog post right from the Export dialog. This one is also found at the Photographer's Toolbox and is donationware. Once installed, you'll find the LR/Blog in the Export To drop-down menu. There's a little more required for set up with this plug-in, and the most obvious requirement is that you need to have a blog. I use it with a WordPress blog, but other platforms are supported (check the LR/Blog page at the Photographer's Toolbox for details).

Enter your blog's URL, username, and password in the LR/Blog panel. From there you can choose to create a full-fledged blog post or you can upload photos to your blog's media gallery for later use (this is what I do most) via the LR/Blog Post Creation panel.

Aside from the novelty of creating a blog post from the Export dialog, there's a lot of power packed into this plug-in. Using tokens that pull data from the photo's own metadata, you can automate the insertion of various data
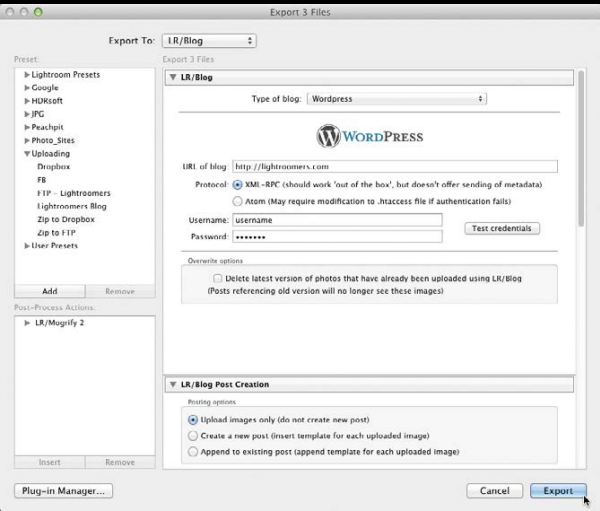
points about your photos, such as exposure info, GPS, title, caption, etc. It uses a template system for the creation of the posts and is highly customizable. If you like to blog about your photos and you're not using this, then you're missing out. ■

ALL IMAGES BY ROB SYLVAN

Maximum Workflow

topaz impression

BY SEAN McCORMACK

Impression is the latest in a long line of plug-ins from Topaz Labs. It was released in September 2014, but at the time of writing, it was already at version 1.1.1, which added new features over version 1. So what does Impression do? Quite simply, it converts photos to digital paintings. Not just any plain painting, but ones based on real brushstrokes, lighting, and textures.

While the name Impression does come from the Impressionist movement with the works of Cézanne et al, there are far more styles available. Go to **topazlabs.com/downloads** to get your free 30-day trial.

getting started

Install the plug-in to get started. Per the install instructions, run Impression to automatically install the External Editor preset for Lightroom. Make sure to restart Lightroom so it picks up the preset. By way of aside, Matt Dawson has a Lightroom script for quick restarts at **http://thephotogeek.com/lightroom**-power-nap-restart-script.

When you do the first run of Impression, click on Take the Tour to get an overall feel for the plug-in. This is a basic look, but it will help before you get into the more detailed look we're doing here.
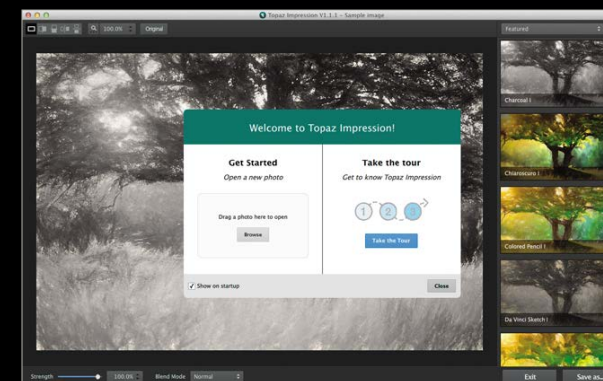
Once Lightroom has restarted, you'll have a new preset in the Photo>Edit In menu. This is also available by Right-clicking on the photo you want to edit. The photo I've chosen here is from the Dragons street theatre group and was selected because it has a good range of color to show off the painting effects.

[*KelbyOne members may download the file used in this tutorial at* **http://kelbyone.com/magazine/issue/january***-2015. All files are for personal use only.*]

the interface

When Impression loads, we're presented with the main image (1) with a preset applied. On the right is a bank of featured presets from which to choose (2). To get a feel for the range of looks available, click each preset. To see all the available presets, click the Featured drop-down menu and choose All Effects. The presets are also split into smaller collections of related looks. You can use the Arrow keys to scroll up and down through the presets.

Generally, each preset is named for the painting or drawing style within, and often named for a specific painter. As you select each preset, a purple bar will load across the top of the image, letting you know the process's progress. I've gone for Impasto I (found in both the Featured and Impressionistic sets). It's almost instant on my MacBook Air, but slower on the older Mac Pro.

In the preview control area (3), you can choose from five views: after, before/after side-by-side split view, before/after top-and-bottom split view, before/after side-by-side full view, and before/after top-and-bottom full view. Next is the zoom section, which reveals a slider on hovering. Once zoomed in, a navigator window appears, allowing you to choose what part of the photo to view. In addition, you can click on the up and down arrows beside the zoom percentage. There are also Fit, 100%, Fill, and Maximum options in the View menu in the Menu Bar. When in the default after view, clicking the Original button shows the before view, as does clicking on the photo itself.

To finish the interface housekeeping, at the bottom left we have a Strength slider (with a manual percentage entry field) and a drop-down menu of blend modes (4). Strength acts like an opacity control between the processed and original photo, while the blend modes emulate those of Photoshop, albeit with a smaller selection.

selective parameters

With that out of the way, let's get into the selective parameters. Our selected preset has a blue border and a little black circle with sliders. Clicking the selected preset, or the Show Parameters icon (sliders) to the right of the presets drop-down menu,

will open the selective parameters. Alternatively, press P. One really good thing about Impression is that no matter what preset you start from, you have access to a full range of controls, not limited like in some other paint programs. There are four panels in Impression: Stroke, Color, Lighting, and Texture. Clicking on a panel header will collapse it or expand it.

the stroke panel

The Stroke panel contains all the controls relating to the brush style you wish to emulate. Because of the versatility of the tools, you need to try low, medium, and high values of each to understand them. This plug-in is loads of fun, so get playing with the sliders! We'll do a specific look at the end once we've examined the tools.

The Brush section contains 17 different brush types from pencil to chalk to palette knife, among others. These form the basic looks for each painting style. Each type was created from a real brush or pencil stroke that was scanned and masked for more realistic painting effects.

Brush Size intelligently changes the size of the brush. For example, if we push it to 1.00, the sky shows large brush strokes, but we retain small details in the leaves. This alone sets it above many paint programs.
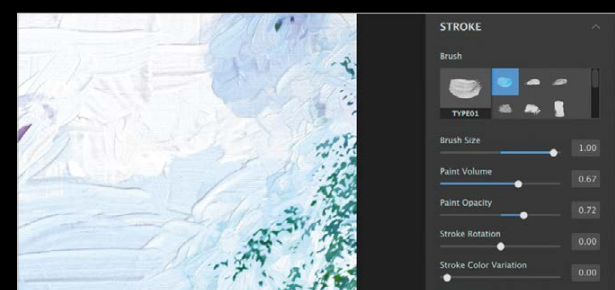
Paint Volume acts like the pickup of paint on a brush. More gives the impression of thicker brush strokes with strong brush edges.

Paint Opacity controls the layering of paint on paint. Lower values show more of the original image but on the underlying texture—think of it as the paper or canvas that you're painting on. Higher amounts act like layering paint on top of paint.

Stroke Rotation and Rotation Variation control the angle of the brushstroke, and how often it changes. This is useful for get-

ting a more organic feel to the photo as a painting, but high values look a little sloppy. Rotation Variation only appears when Stroke Rotation is moved from 0.

Stroke Color Variation adds more color to each stroke. At high values, the colors bear no relation to the original colors in the photo. Quite fun, actually. The figure below shows high values of Stroke Rotation, Rotation Variation, and Stroke Color Variation.

Spill controls how much the paint bleeds into other strokes. High values have the paint spill well beyond nearby paint strokes.

Smudge smoothes outlines and creates wavy effects at higher values—very visible in the Liquid Lines presets in the Modern set.

Coverage controls how much of the paper is painted on. For most paintings, you want full coverage, but for sketches and watercolors, the whole paper often isn't used. When Coverage is dropped from full, two additional controls appear: Coverage Transition, which acts as a feathering between the background texture and the painted area, and Coverage Center, which controls the midpoint of the painting.
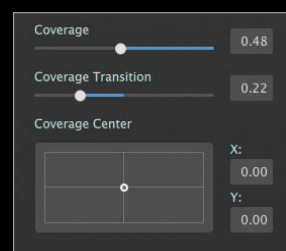
the color panel

The nine tiles in the Color panel control the hue, saturation, and lightness (HSL) of the overall image and the individual color bands within (see next page). Click on the tile of the color that you want to edit. Hue controls the shade of the color, while Saturation controls the strength. Lightness controls how light or dark the color is. While it's easy to see what the overall HSL sliders do, it's not as easy to picture where the individual colors affect the photo.

Fortunately, Impression has a little cheat to help. When you hover over any of the color tiles, hatching appears on the parts of the photo it will affect. Hovering over the Magenta tile shows a great deal of our dragon will be affected by changing the HSL sliders.

the lighting panel

Lighting is more than changing the luminosity of the painting. The Brightness slider is more of a highlight control, while trying to retain darker colors. More extreme values will brighten the whole image. Contrast, as always, works to darken shadows and boost highlights when increased, or flatten out the tone of an image when decreased.

Vignette darkens the edges, and isn't a typical paint control, but can help bring focus into the center of the image. As with other sliders, changing Vignette adds more controls: Vignette Transition, which feathers the vignette, and Vignette Center, which sets the midpoint of the vignette.

Light Direction is interesting. Rather than a painting control, it simulates the light that falls on a painting. For oils it creates shadows from the paint, so the direction can have a radical effect on the look of the painting. Placed in the center, the brushes flatten out and lack texture. Even with textures, like canvas for example, the underlying texture also gets flattened out (see below).
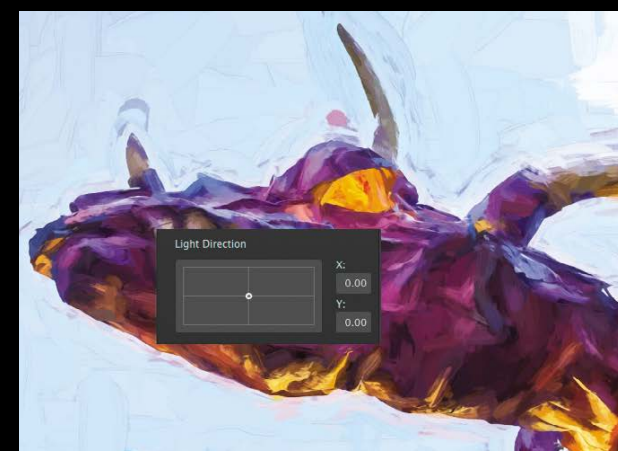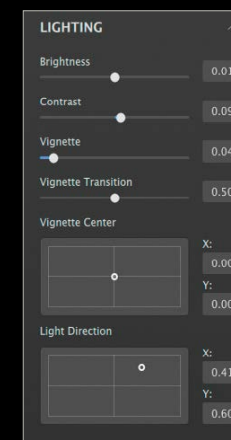
the texture panel

Texture controls the background of the image, that is, the material the photo gets painted onto. The Strength slider controls the opacity of the selected texture. Size controls the scale of the texture; for example, a 24x16" print would need a different texture size than a 6x4" print if you want it to look realistic.

Next are the textures, with varied styles from paper to brickwork, and even cardboard. The inclusion of brickwork makes Impression useful for creating painted backdrops for composite images.
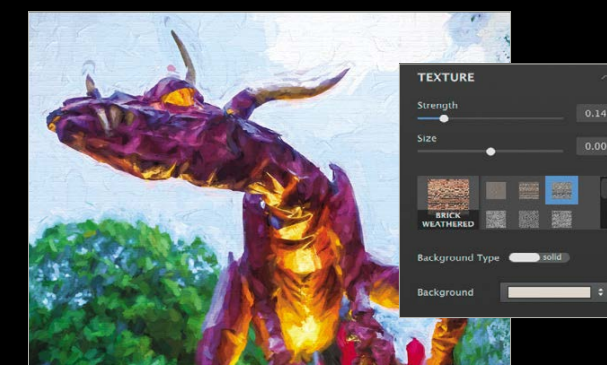
Background Type switches between the original texture and a colorized version. This color can be selected from the Background Type swatch that appears when Solid is selected. This matters for the Coverage settings in the Stroke panel, as the non-painted areas will take on this color, as shown here.
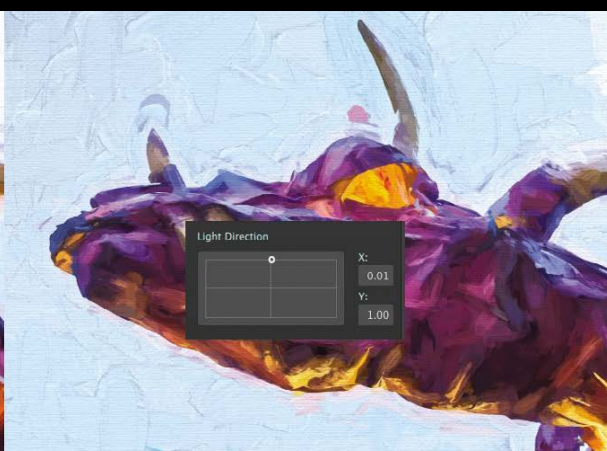
saving presets

One of the collections available in the presets drop-down menu is My Presets, an indicator that you can make your own. It's easy. As soon as you change a setting, a + icon appears beside the name of the current preset (as well as an asterisk to indicate that the settings have changed). Click the + to bring up a save dialog. Give the preset a new effect name, and choose which collections you want it to show in.
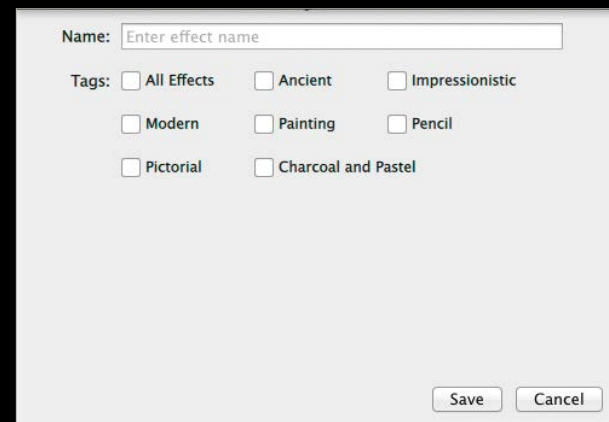
preferences

Impression has a basic Preferences dialog as of version 1.1. You can opt to have an example image on start-up. Unticking Start with Preset Panel will open Impression with the selective parameters panels active. For Processing Options, you can choose to Update Slider Value While Dragging, and Enable High-Resolution Processing.

let's get practical

Impression is so much fun that I can't finish without doing something specific to my dragon. Follow along with the file download.

1. From the Impasto I preset, select Brush Type04.
2. Bring Stroke Width and Length to 0.55.
3. Set Smudge to 0.70 to get a wavy effect.
4. Click the Magenta tile (the rightmost one) in the Color panel and set Hue to –0.55, Saturation to 0.35, and Lightness to –0.47 to make it a rich blue. This cool tone complements the yellow underbelly.
5. Set the Light Direction to top center for a midday sun look.
6. In the Texture panel, choose Brick Weathered. The wall looks like the side of a tower, so increase the Size to 1.00 to make it look more like a schoolyard wall.

That's it. Now you have a cool mural that's our featured image! ■ ▭

After

Before
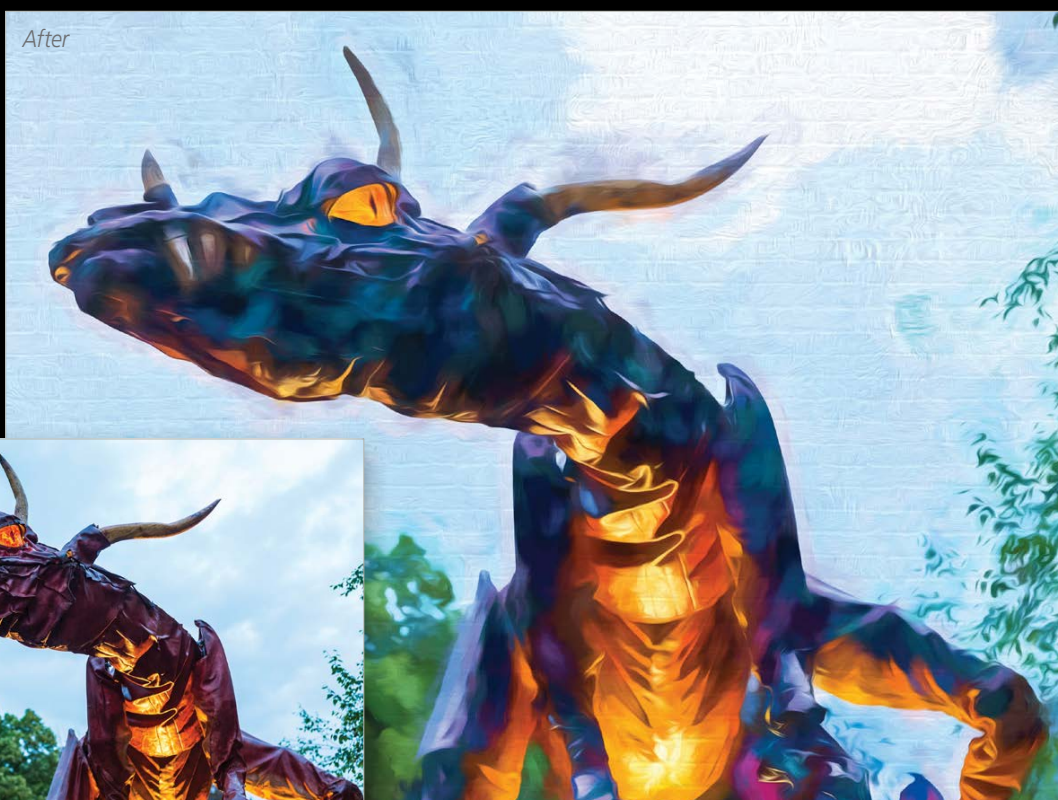
ALL IMAGES BY SEAN McCORMACK

Tips&Tricks

SEÁN DUGGAN

The Adjustment Brush and the Graduated Filter are the core of the localized editing capabilities in Lightroom. There are more precise ways to create a mask to target a specific area in Photoshop, of course, but in many cases, the tools in Lightroom are all that you'll need. This issue, we'll take a look at some essential tips for these tools.

adjustment brush shortcuts

Press K to open the Adjustment Brush panel. The same key will also close the panel when you're done. To switch a brush to Erase mode, hold down Option (PC: Alt) as you use the brush. The letter O on the keyboard toggles between showing and hiding the colored overlay of the brush mask. To change the color of the overlay, go to Tools>Adjustment Brush Overlay.

adjustment brush size and feather

Change the size of the brush by tapping the Left Bracket key ([) to make the brush smaller and the Right Bracket key (]) to make it larger.

With a slight addition to this shortcut, you can change the Feather setting for the brush to make it harder or softer. Shift plus the Left Bracket key reduces the Feather value, making the brush edge harder; Shift plus the Right Bracket key makes the brush softer. The two circles of the brush cursor reflect the hardness of the brush. The farther apart they are, the softer the brush is, while the circles being closer together indicate a harder edge. The space between the circles represents the feather zone where the brush coverage transitions from 100% to 0%. A higher Feather setting will have a larger feather zone.

configure different adjustment brush tips

The A and B buttons allow you to create two different brushes that can be used with a single brush adjustment. For example, you might want a large, soft-edged brush with a high Feather setting and then a smaller brush with a harder edge for more accuracy. Only the brush settings for Size, Feather, and Flow apply to the A and B brushes (i.e., you can't have a B brush with a different combination of adjustment settings).
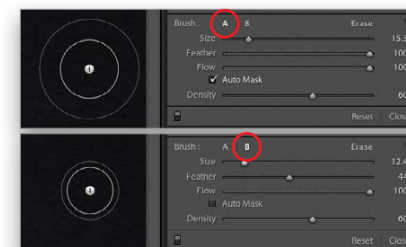
graduated filter tips

The shortcut to activate the Graduated Filter is M. When the tool is activated you can begin setting the adjustment using the sliders in the Graduated Filter panel, or you can set those after you've defined the area that will be affected.

Start dragging to begin the adjustment; stop dragging to end the adjustment. To constrain the gradient so it doesn't wobble as you're dragging it, hold down the Shift key.

Everything in between these two points is where the adjustment fades from full strength to nothing. If you need to invert the gradient after you've drawn it, the shortcut is the Apostrophe key (').

Adjust all of the applied sliders at once by Option-dragging (PC: Alt-dragging) on the circular pin. Drag left to move the sliders closer to the default position, thus minimizing the effect, and drag right to increase the effect.

radial filter shortcuts

Press Shift-M to activate the Radial Filter. By default any Radial Filter adjustment is applied to the area outside the radial shape you define. To invert the mask and have the adjustment applied to the area inside the circular or elliptical shape, the shortcut is the same as for the Graduated Filter, the Apostrophe key ('). There's also an Invert Mask checkbox at the bottom of the control panel for this tool.
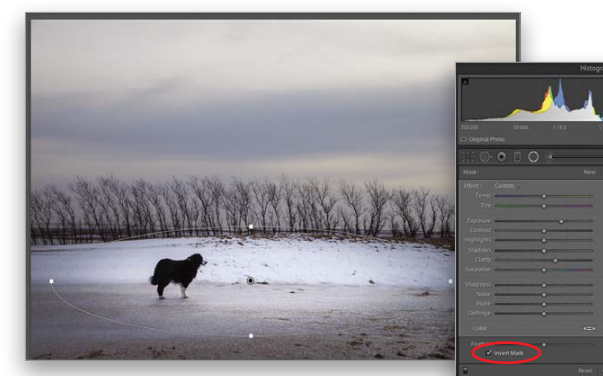
Dragging on the side handles will change the size and shape of the Radial Filter by adjusting the side you click on, as well as the opposite side. Option-drag (PC: Alt-drag) on a handle to adjust only that side. Shift-drag on a handle to adjust all sides with the point of origin being the center of the radial shape. Shift-Option-drag (PC: Shift-Alt-drag) on a handle and the entire shape can be affected with the point of origin being the opposite handle.

To make a copy of an adjustment, drag on the pin while pressing Command-Option (PC: Ctrl-Alt). ■

ALL IMAGES BY SEÁN DUGGAN

COMPOSITING SECRETS

BY MARK S. JOHNSON

Creating a **COMPELLING** photo composite is as much about finding the right assets as it is about the process of blending them together. If you're unable to capture your own assets, stock image sites are treasure chests for images, *as well as* **INSPIRATION**. While hunting for the images used in this issue's tutorial, I encountered dozens of stock photos that sparked ideas. When I finally stumbled across the images we'll use, I was so **CAPTIVATED** by the brilliant colors and dynamic shapes that I couldn't wait to begin exploring the possibilities. This level of enthusiasm is key to crafting a composite that stops viewers in their tracks and elicits an emotional response.

Our goal is to blend the leaping dancer with the prismatic powder so it appears as though she is actually *inside* the explosion. To accomplish this, we'll need to extract the dancer, balance the tones and colors, blend the powder into the edges of the dancer using a custom brush, and add punch to the overall scene.

©Alexander Yakovlev/Fotolia

©lag_cz/Fotolia

STEP ONE: Open the image of the leaping dancer. Activate the Quick Selection tool (W) and paint over the subject to produce a rough selection. Use the Left and Right Bracket keys to resize the tool as necessary to select smaller regions. To eliminate areas where the selection spills beyond the edges, hold Option (PC: Alt) and paint the selection away. Don't worry about selecting fine hair details or patches of hair where the backdrop is visible. We'll deal with the hair in a later step.

In skin and clothing regions where the Quick Selection tool creates a bumpy or errant selection, activate the Polygonal Lasso tool (nested under the Lasso tool [L] in the Toolbox), click the Add to Selection or Subtract from Selection icons in the Options Bar, and clean up the bumps. Click the Add Layer Mask icon (circle in a square) at the base of the Layers panel to turn the selection into a mask.

STEP TWO: Open the exploding powder image, and activate the Move tool (V). While pressing Shift, drag the dancer into the exploding powder photo. The exploding powder is a little too big and will benefit from a little rotation. In the Layers panel, click the lock icon next to the Background layer to unlock it. Press Command-T (PC: Ctrl-T) to activate Free Transform. While pressing Option-Shift (PC: Alt-Shift), grab a corner handle and scale the powder down slightly. Now hover just outside the bounding box and rotate the powder so the fragmented blast on the right side looks like it's exploding from her abdomen. Press Enter to commit the transformation.

While pressing Command (PC: Ctrl), click the Create a New Layer icon at the base of the Layers panel. This creates a new layer *below* the active one. Press D to set the default Foreground and Background colors. Press Option-Delete (PC: Alt-Backspace) to fill the new layer with the Foreground color (black). Use the Crop tool (C) to eliminate excess black.

STEP THREE: Let's refine the clothing and skin edges of the dancer so they exhibit believable softness and show no evidence of fringing. In the Layers panel, activate the mask for the dancer layer (Layer 1). Choose Select>Refine Mask. Set the View menu to On Layers. Drag the Feather slider to 0.8 px to add a touch of softness to the edge. Move the Shift Edge slider left until all fringing is eliminated. Try not to shift the edge any farther than necessary as this may result in loss of too much edge. Set the Output To menu to Layer Mask, and click OK.
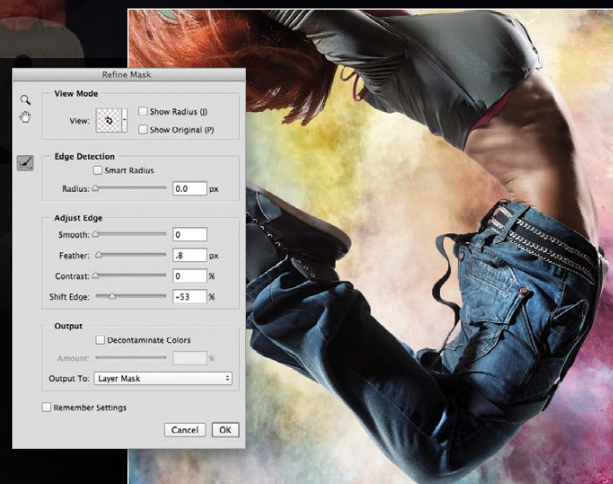
STEP FOUR: Even though the dancer was captured on a white background, producing an accurate selection of her hair is extremely challenging. Fortunately, since she was captured on a white background, there's a marvelous trick for dealing with her hair. With the subject layer active, press Command-J (PC: Ctrl-J) to duplicate it. Turn off the visibility of the original dancer layer (Layer 1) by clicking on its Eye icon. Right-click on the duplicate layer's mask thumbnail (Layer 1 copy) and choose Delete Layer Mask. Since this is a reasonably dark-haired model in front of a white backdrop, change the blend mode from Normal to Multiply. Notice how this immediately solves the hair edge problem.
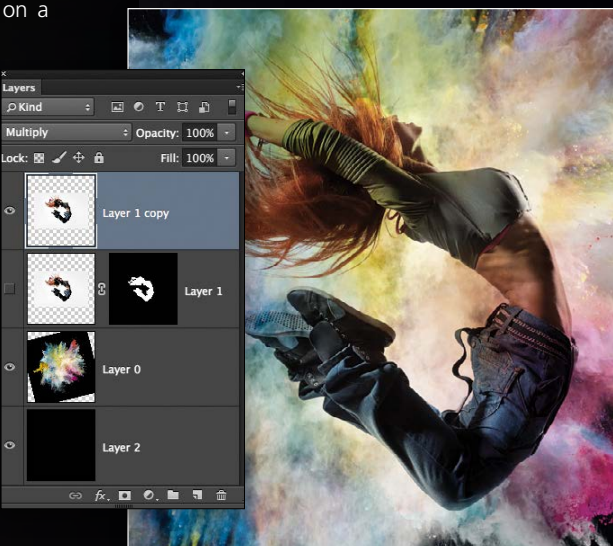
In fact, Multiply blend mode gives the dancer an overall believable appearance—with two small exceptions. We need to eliminate the barely visible line at the perimeter of the dancer layer and we need to selectively restore light to critical areas of the dancer. (If you have trouble locating the perimeter line, turn the visibility of the duplicated dancer layer off and on.) To eliminate the perimeter line, click the Add Layer Mask icon at the base of the Layers panel, and switch to the Brush tool (B). Using a large, soft-edged black brush at 100% Opacity and Flow in the Options Bar, paint the line away. To accomplish this with just five clicks, hold the Shift key and click on each corner, finishing with a click on the original corner. Pressing Shift paints a straight line between each click.

To restore light to the dancer, activate the original dancer layer (Layer 1) and press Command-J (PC: Ctrl-J) to duplicate it (Layer 1 copy 2). Turn on visibility of the duplicate layer and drag it to the top of the layer stack. Activate the mask, press D, then Command-Delete (PC: Ctrl-Backspace) to fill the mask with the Background color (black). Load the original dancer's (Layer 1's) mask as a selection by Command-clicking (PC: Ctrl-clicking) it. Using a white brush set to 50% Opacity, paint over areas that benefit from additional light. Don't be afraid to paint over interesting areas more than once to add more light.

STEP FIVE: Although the tones and colors look pretty good, the dancer will benefit from some subtle shifts. With the selection still active, choose Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Curves, and click OK. From the Properties panel flyout menu, choose Auto-Select Targeted Adjustment Tool. This changes the default behavior of the On-Image Controls to on. Hover over a highlight with detail on the dancer, and click-and-drag up to add light. Be subtle. Now click on a shadow with detail and drag up to open the shadows just a little.
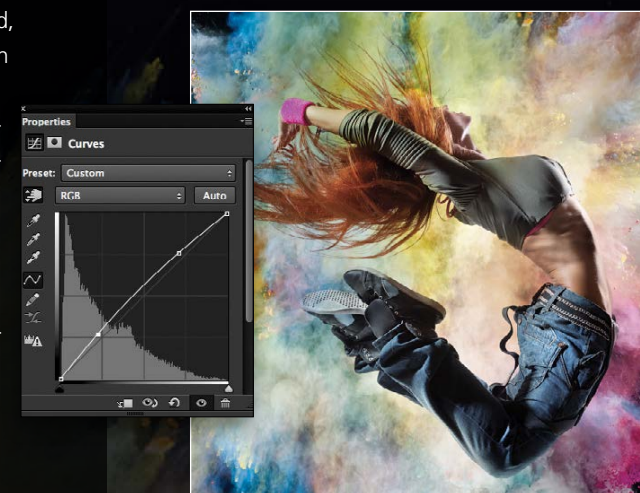
If there's a noticeable line in the hair caused by the original mask, fix it by painting with a large, soft-edged, white brush at 100% Opacity. Don't worry about being precise. A little extra light on the powder behind the dancer's head is acceptable.

Now let's address the color. Pull yet another selection from the original dancer's (Layer 1's) mask by Command-clicking (PC: Ctrl-clicking) it. Choose Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Color Balance, and click OK. Add a touch of Cyan and Green to the Midtones to reduce the red light on the dancer's skin and clothing.
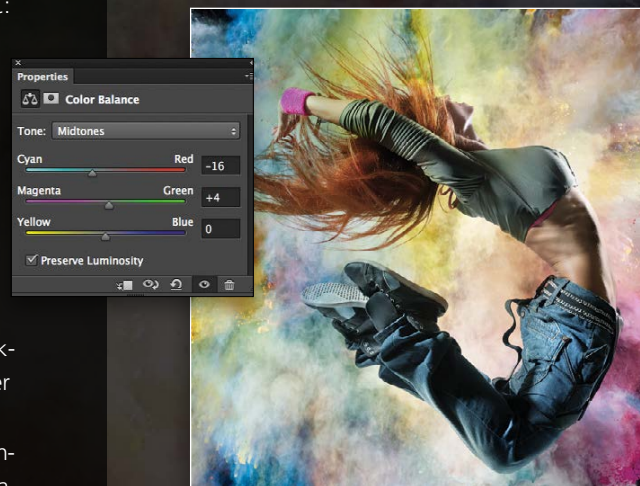
STEP SIX: Here's where the fun really begins. We'll customize a brush from QBrushes to blend the exploding powder with the edges of the dancer. Begin by Option-dragging (PC: Alt-dragging) the exploding powder layer (Layer 0) to the top of the layer stack (Option-dragging [PC: Alt-dragging] makes a copy of the original layer [Layer 0 copy]). Add a black-filled mask by Option-clicking (PC: Alt-clicking) the Add Layer Mask icon at the base of the Layers panel.

Now visit http://qbrushes.net/xplosion-brushes and download the free Xplosion Brushes. After placing the brushes in a meaningful location on your hard drive, return to Photoshop and activate the Brush tool. Open the Brush Preset Picker in the Options Bar and choose Load Brushes from the flyout menu (gear icon). Navigate to the Xplosion Brush set and click Open. In the Brush Preset Picker, choose the brush labeled xBLOW2 (255 pixels). For the practice file, you'll want to drop the size of the brush to about 50 px.
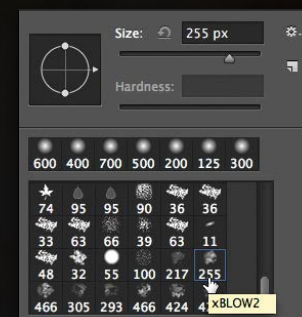
In the left side of the Brush panel (Window>Brush), click on Shape Dynamics. Slightly increase both the Size and Angle Jitter values.

Now click on Scattering. Increase the Scatter value to approximately 100%.

Set the brush to 50% Opacity in the Options Bar and paint over the dancer's edges to mingle the powder with the dancer. To build the effect in desired regions, paint more than once.
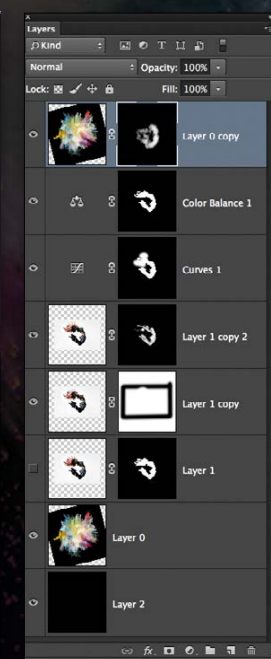
STEP SEVEN: To accentuate the most interesting features of the dancer, we'll perform a little dodging and burning. Option-click (PC: Alt-click) the Create a New Layer icon at the base of the Layers panel. In the New Layer dialog, change the Mode drop-down menu to Overlay, check the box labeled Fill with Overlay-Neutral Color (50% Gray), and click OK. Borrow the selection from the original dancer's (Layer 1's) mask by Command-clicking (PC: Ctrl-clicking) it. Using the default, soft-edged, white brush at 10% Opacity, paint over all existing highlights that benefit from more light. Build the effect where desired. Now press X to swap the Foreground color to black and paint over existing shadows to add definition to edges. Press Command-D (PC: Ctrl-D) to deselect.
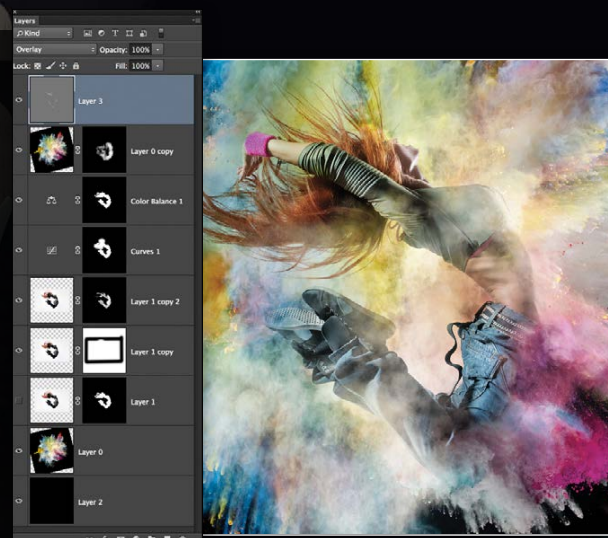
STEP EIGHT: An image with details like this really benefits from additional clarity. While holding Option (PC: Alt), choose Layer>Merge Visible. This creates a composite layer at the top of the stack. Choose Filter>Convert for Smart Filters. Now choose Filter>Camera Raw Filter. Adjust the Clarity setting until the image really pops.

Click OK to exit the Camera Raw dialog. Here's a look at the completed colorful composite.
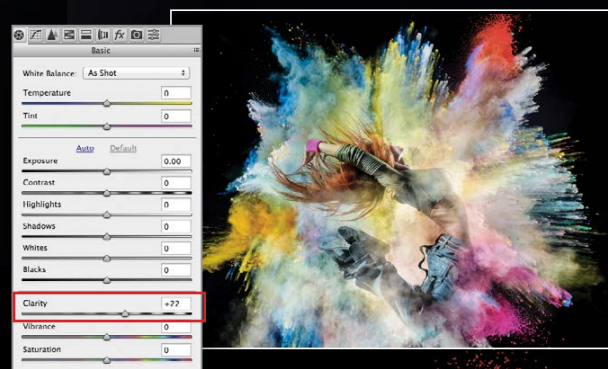
COMPOSITING PROVIDES LIMITLESS FUN BECAUSE IT CHALLENGES US TO THINK CRE- ATIVELY WHILE CALLING INTO PLAY A NEARLY ENDLESS VARIETY OF PHOTOSHOP TECHNIQUES. KEEP IN MIND THAT THE ORIGINAL ASSETS YOU CHOOSE SET THE TONE FOR THE ENTIRE PRO- CESS. FIND IMAGES THAT GET YOUR PULSE RACING AND YOU'RE ALREADY ON YOUR WAY TO EXHILARATING POSSIBILITIES. ■

Photoshop Proving Ground
sharpen with curves

SCOTT VALENTINE

Regular readers of this column (you know who you are) are familiar with my penchant for putting familiar tools in unfamiliar situations. This time I'm bolting a Curves adjustment layer onto a popular portrait retouching technique in order to—ready for this?—sharpen your images!

▶ Many portrait retouchers are familiar with a technique called frequency separation. It's used to split color and texture information into separate layers for better control over each (see Episode 386 of *Photoshop User TV* at **KelbyTV.com**, about 14 minutes in with Pete Collins). As part of this technique, you get a free high-frequency layer that isolates the fine texture in your photograph. If you aren't familiar with frequency separation, I encourage you to go watch Pete's presentation. Go ahead, I'll wait.

Note: The quick-and-dirty alternative to frequency separation for purposes of this demonstration is something you probably have seen at some point: high-pass sharpening. To create a high-pass sharpening layer, duplicate your photograph's Background layer (Command-J [PC: Ctrl-J]), then go to Filter>Other>High Pass and apply a small Radius setting of about 3–8 pixels. You want to end up with a gray layer where you can really only see the smaller details in your image, but not so small that all you get is noise. In the Layers panel, set this duplicate layer's blend mode to Hard Light for this exercise. The Curves adjustment layer will get clipped to this layer as described in the main body of this article. Your results will be a little different, but the basic idea is exactly the same.

Step One: With a basic frequency separation approach, you'll end up with a high-frequency layer that looks gray, and is typically set to Linear Light blend mode. Add a Curves adjustment layer above the high-frequency layer (Layer>New Adjustment Layer>Curves). Hold Option (PC: Alt) and click on the boundary between the Curves layer and your high-frequency layer in the Layers panel to clip them together. Clipping the adjustment layer ensures it only affects the high-frequency information.
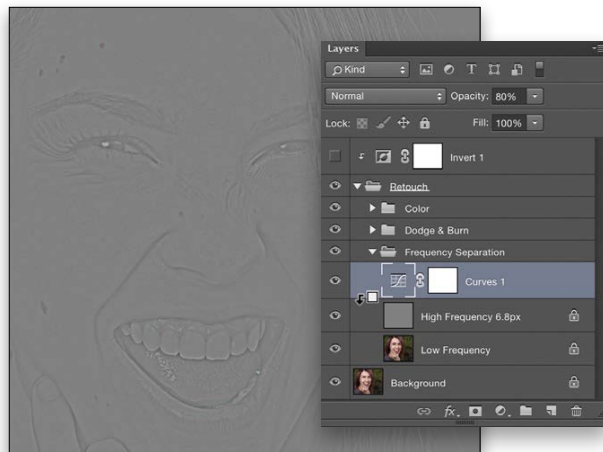
Step Two: The first thing I do with the Curves adjustment is to open the Properties panel (Window>Properties) and click in the middle of the graph along the line. The center point is Input: 125 and Output: 125. This helps keep you from adjusting the overall tonality of the image so you can work just on the sharpening effect. The next thing to do is set the blend mode of the Curves adjustment layer to Vivid Light. This will probably appear to be too strong, so we're going to dial back some settings in a bit.

Tip: If you click on a point in the Curves preview in the Properties dialog, you can manually enter values in the Input and Output fields at the bottom of the panel.

Step Three: Since the basic setup is in place, let's take a look under the hood and see what we have before we start fiddling with the knobs. The high-frequency layer is created by removing nearly all color information, leaving behind edges and smaller

features. The details of how this happens aren't important right now; just take a look at the fact that the layer is mostly neutral gray, while the edges and features are lighter and darker with some bits of color. The blend modes we chose ignore gray, which effectively behaves like a mask for those areas.
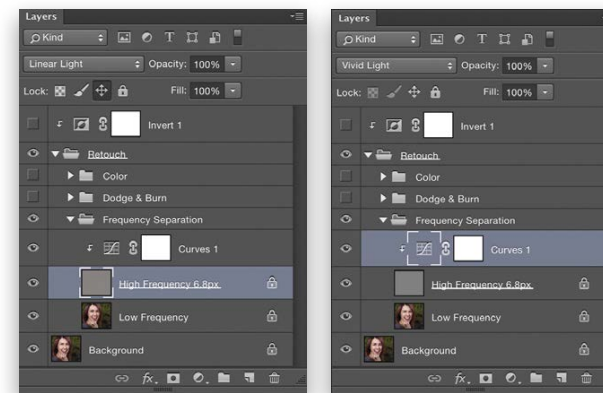

Step Four: Now that we know the blend modes ignore gray, we're free to play with everything *not gray* in the layer. The Curves adjustment is there to change the relative contrast between these not-gray areas. Add two control points and create this basic contrast shape. The effect is even stronger now with very bright, blown-out highlights. Things are probably looking very unattractive. Fortunately, we're able to take advantage of some additional features to deal with this.
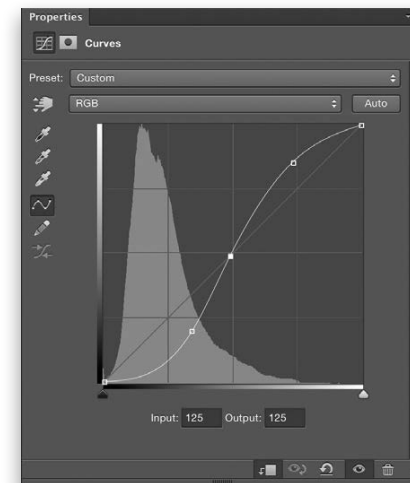

Step Five: The most obvious choice would be to lower the Opacity of the Curves adjustment layer, but we don't want to be obvious just yet. Instead, we do want to refine what parts of the high-frequency layer are adjusted by the curves. To the right of the Curves label in the Layers panel, double-click to open the Blending Options in the Layer Style dialog. Down in the Blend If section, start dragging the white triangle under This Layer to the left. There will be little to no change until you hit some point, different for every image, where the highlights you just created simply disappear.

At the point where the highlights change, stop dragging and hold down the Option (PC: Alt) key, then drag the left half of the slider further left and move the right half back to the right until the highlight edges are soft, anywhere from 20 to 70 levels between them or more. Splitting the slider lets you feather the effect of blending, and allows the transition between affected regions to be softer. Click OK.
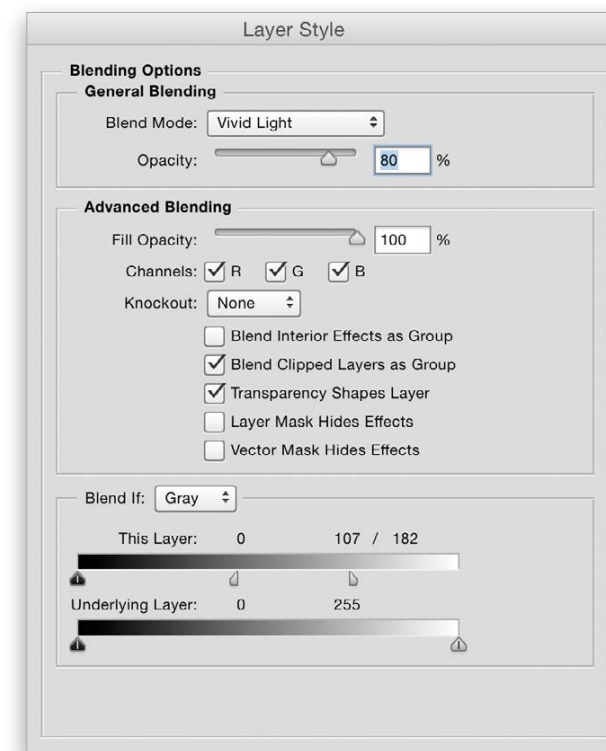
Step Six: Okay, now go ahead and lower the Opacity of the Curves adjustment layer until you like the effect. You'll probably have to tweak the settings back and forth a few times, but that's perfectly fine. In fact, that's one major benefit of this technique—you aren't locked in to the sharpening result. And don't forget that you can do this multiple times with various settings if you use the adjustment layer mask to paint in only the areas you want sharpened.
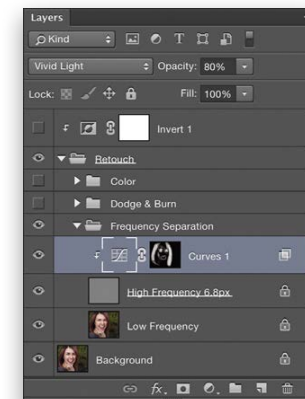
The Curves adjustment is only changing the boundary from gray to light, not actually applying sharpening. The result is similar, though. In an upcoming column, I'll talk about edges in some detail, but for now just realize that this technique is not truly sharpening so much as adjusting local contrast in a very fine way.

Traditionally, sharpening is done as one of the last steps before final output. That's generally good advice, so consider this particular approach as intermediate sharpening. I like to use it after I've done a first pass at cleaning up the high-frequency layer for major blemishes because it gives me a good idea of when I'm starting to overdo a skin correction. If you really crank up the contrast curve, you can see when textures don't match or blend well, then you can reduce the contrast back to reasonable levels.

Oh, one last thing, don't get locked into this being only for portraits. Check out this before and after of leaves. ■

Before

After

Before

After

ALL IMAGES BY SCOTT VALENTINE

Product Reviews

▼ Topaz Impression

Superior Replacement for Retired Oil Paint Photoshop Filter
Review by Jessica Maldonado

©Oleg Gekman/Dollar Photo Club

Topaz Labs says it's excited about Impression because it's the first product to help you create real, authentic art. Photographers may balk at this statement, but let's acknowledge that Topaz Impression is a photo-manipulation product, and presume they define "authentic art" as painterly art with a capital A.

Impression works as a standalone editor or Adobe Photoshop plug-in. If you want to add stylized looks to evoke a mood, fit a particular design, or sell extra prints to art-loving customers, this is a good tool: One that more than fills the void left by the removal of the Oil Paint filter in Photoshop CC 2014.

When you open an image in Impression, it prepares previews of its more than 100 presets. Choose one as a starting point, and tweak the sliders to your heart's content. Or start from scratch with 17 realistic brushes and thousands of ways to apply them. It takes a sensitive eye to select increments of each adjustment as it relates to your subject and resolution, but patience and experimentation will yield lovely results.

According to Topaz Labs, they "designed Topaz Impression to use the same method that great painters use: paint brushstrokes one at a time. (It just does this very fast!) Impression can paint over 10,000 brushstrokes in less than a second, all while completely following your artistic direction." Whatever mathematical wizardry drives their algorithm under the hood, it does seem to do that, with strokes that move with the nuances of your images.

I'd love to load Impression's brushes into Photoshop so any masking or edits could match. History states and section toggles would be welcome, but overall, it's great fun and works well. If you can sell a few "authentic art" prints for the price of this application, it will pay for itself before you can say, "artiste!" [*For a tutorial on using Topaz Impression, see "Maximum Workflow" on p. 92.—Ed.*] ∎

Company: Topaz Labs	Price: $99.99
Web: **www.topazlabs.com**	Rating: ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◇

▲ Hot: Easy to use; many great presets make nice starting points
▼ Not: Waiting while every preset loads is tedious

▼ Engraver III

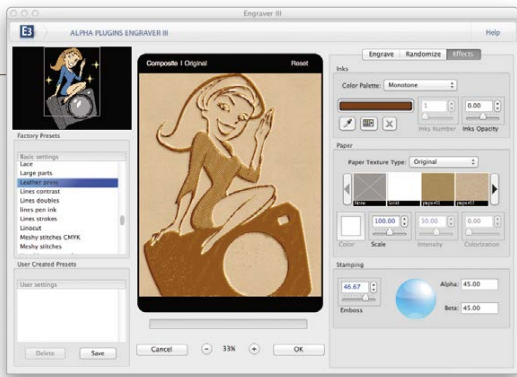### Turn Your Picture into a Beautiful Engraving
Review by Jay Nelson

Engraver III is a plug-in for Photoshop that can apply a wide variety of engraving-like effects to any image, including photos, logos, or even text. It works on any 8-bit RGB or CMYK image, but seems optimized for Photoshop files sized from 2–6 MB. (While sliders let you adjust the line effects for larger or smaller images, that process quickly becomes tedious.)

Dozens of presets help you get started, from standard engraving styles to cheesecloth, rubber stamp, wood, linocut, and leather. The success of the effect depends greatly on the subject matter: Architectural and nature photos work well, as do line-art logos. After choosing an effect, you can customize almost everything about it using sliders and dials, and even use randomizing controls to make it look more like it was made by hand.

A third customizing panel lets you control the color palette used in the effect, the paper texture and color beneath it, and the depth of the stamping. These are tremendously useful when creating embossed effects or when imitating old-fashioned prints.

For additional flexibility, you can add a second layer of engraving that contains a different effect. When you find a combination of settings you like, you can save them as a custom preset for future use.

Engraver III may do what you need, but if you're looking for an engraving plug-in, you might also want to take a look at Cutline from Andromeda Software ($89), which produces different kinds of effects. Both offer a free trial period. ∎

Company: AlphaPlugins	Price: $74.95 (Upgrade: $25)
Web: **www.alphaplugins.com**	Rating: ◆ ◆ ◆ ◇ ◇

▲ Hot: Variety of effects; useful color, texture, and stamping
▼ Not: Previews are only accurate at 100% view

▼ Perfectly Clear 2
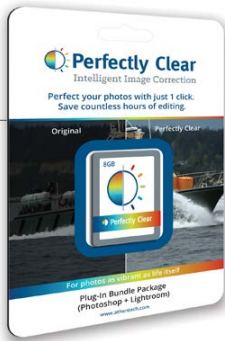
Photo Corrections the Easy Way
Review by Erik Vlietinck

Athentech Imaging promises that with the Perfectly Clear 2 plug-in you can correct photos in much less time than it would take with Adobe Photoshop or Lightroom tools.

I tested Perfectly Clear 2 with Photoshop CS6, and it tackles problems mainly with portraits, including sharpness; noise; red-eye correction; exposure; skin shine, tint, and blemishes; dark circles; and teeth color. I had the impression Perfectly Clear is optimized for snapshots taken in Auto mode.

The Perfectly Clear plug-in for Photoshop and Lightroom has its own interface, showing the image on the left and presets and adjustment controls on the right. There's a group of eight presets that should cover most of the imperfections found in snapshots. The idea is to start with one of the presets and then click on the Adjust tab to make further refinements. That's a good way to work quickly through one or multiple images, and having only eight presets helps you decide which flaw in the photo is most critical.

The Portrait corrections in Perfectly Clear 2 work better and faster than Photoshop. The adjustment parameters, however, are fairly basic (except for portraits). Landscapes, architecture, and object photos can be corrected only with parameters such as Exposure, Depth (looked a lot like microcontrast to me), Vibrancy, Fidelity, Tint Correction, Sharpening, and Noise.

I found terms used in the interface confusing; for example, what does Fidelity correct? It's said to restore full-color spectrum; but what does that mean with respect to, say, a Canon EOS 5D?

Portrait-enhancement features that stood out were Catchlight, Blemish Removal, and Light Diffusion. Face Slimming did what it set out to do, but it can easily be overdone. Sharpening is subtle, with Perfectly Clear 2 using an algorithm that avoids artifacts even with the slider set at full strength. ∎

Company: Athentech Imaging	Price: $149
Web: **www.athentech.com**	Rating: ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◇

▲ Hot: Portrait tools; sharpening can't be overdone
▼ Not: Some features only meaningful for low-end camera shots
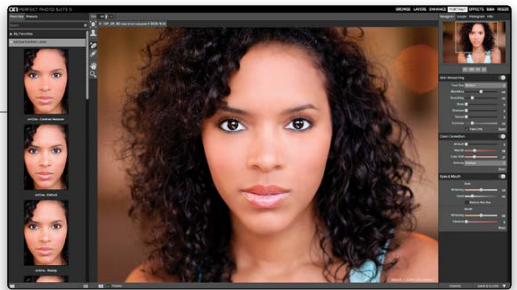
▼ Perfect Photo Suite 9 Premium

Updated Photo Editing and Effects Software
Review by Daniel M. East

Kristina Sherk

onOne Software has always offered some of the most fun Photoshop tools that produce outstanding results, making it difficult to find fault with any new version, and Perfect Photo Suite 9 Premium is no exception. onOne has incorporated their most popular tools into an easily navigable suite. By not only improving performance, but also adding even more user-friendly features for the tasks photographers do most, onOne shows us that it's now a more portable world with more control over your images no matter where you are.

Without question, the first thing that jumps out is the blazing speed of image previews, and you can also see more accurately than in previous versions what you're going to get. The common-sense interface helps improve workflow, too, because recognizing the function is simply based on the control's familiar icon, using standard indicators. Perfect Photo Suite 9 isn't just about correcting your photos, it's also about improving them: creative changes to produce what the mind's eye might see in a way that takes images and design elements to new levels.

The standout feature (among many) would have to be the updated masking tool. Just outline your object, and you can easily eliminate the background in less time and with less fine-tuning than any other product of this kind.

There are too many features to go into here but, rest assured, onOne Software continues to set the standard with new features, performance, and cloud-based storage compatibility. The software handles each task quickly and easily—in both the standalone application and the plug-in editor for Adobe Photoshop and Lightroom.

If you're not sure, check out the free trial version and try before you buy (or upgrade). The proof is in the output and it's fine, indeed. ∎

Company: onOne Software, Inc.	Price: $149.95 (Upgrade: $99.95)
Web: **www.ononesoftware.com**	Rating: ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

▲ Hot: Speed; masking tool; cloud-based storage support
▼ Not:

▼ Akurat Lighting LL2120hc3 V-WHITE

Color-Accurate Video- and Photo-Fill LED Lamp
Review by Erik Vlietinck

Video lights for on-camera use with a color rendering index (CRI) of 98 are hard to find, but the aluminum Akurat LL2120hc3 V-WHITE fits in the palm of your hand, provides high brightness, has excellent build quality, and includes two white balance settings, all at a low price.

The V-WHITE video light has a CRI of 95+ (R1–R14 greater than 95, including R9 and R12; Ra=98) and a high luminous emittance. You mount the 270-g lamp on a camera or tripod with the hot-shoe adapter or the 1/4" mount, and adjust the light direction with a traditional yoke. The light bundle extends to a 120° angle, which is sufficient to fill the whole frame.

I tested the LL2120hc3 V-WHITE with a spectrophotometer at a distance of 50 cm, revealing the following values: Lowest dim setting—30 lx at 5770K; halfway setting—470 lx at 5800K; and full setting—850 lx at 5800K.

In a second test, I shot an object at one meter with a LumoPro LP180 flash set at 1/128 and zoom factor 50mm, followed by the LL2120hc3 V-WHITE at its highest setting. The camera was fixed at 1/125 and f/2.8. The V-WHITE proved to be useful as a continu-ous studio light (a couple of them could replace a softbox) or as an extra fill light when flash alone won't cut it.

For the final test, I used the LL2120hc3 V-WHITE in a huge demo hall with a high ceiling. The hall was well lit with overhead fluorescent tubes, but this job required shooting the internal structure of an industrial printer. Aiming the LL2120hc3 V-WHITE at the printer's insides from a distance of one meter proved the V-WHITE to be quite capable of overpowering the light overhead. For a lamp the size of your hand, that's no small feat. ■

Company: Akurat Lighting	Price: $270
Web: http://akuratlighting.com	Rating: ◆◆◆◆◆

▲ Hot: High CRI; flicker-free dimming; quality build; price

▼ Not:

▼ HP ZBook 15 G2

Super-Powered Mobile Workstation
Review by Daniel M. East

New hardware is always great, but it can be tough to choose the right laptop when you need a lot of power on the road. If you prefer a Windows platform, the HP ZBook 15 G2 is an excellent choice, plus it offers connectivity options that are out of this world.

Under the Windows 7 Professional 64 OS (and a Windows 8.1 Pro license), the ZBook 15 G2 (tested) gets its faster-than-a-speeding-bullet superpowers from an Intel Core i7-4810MQ processor with Intel HD Graphics 4600 (2.8 GHz, up to 3.8 GHz with Intel Turbo Boost Technology), 6-MB cache, and vPro technology. The more-than-capable NVIDIA Quadro K2100M, 2-GB graphics card, along with 16 GB of RAM may not give you x-ray vision, but the 720p, HD video conferencing camera is sharp and works well, even in low lighting. The DTS audio is respectable for a laptop, and external speakers (or headphones) sound great. HP also offers video and audio expansion options.

For connectivity, the HP ZBook 15 G2 offers a complete range of ports, including three USB 3 (with one charging port); one USB 2; one Thunderbolt 2 (for the ultimate in throughput and hub options); one DisplayPort 1.2; an optional second battery bay; and of course, a docking connector. Add to that the ZBook's slots for ExpressCard/54, SD, and a smartcard reader, and there isn't much that you can't do with this powerful workstation. Also worth noting is the excellent signal reception of its Intel Dual Band Wireless-AC 7260 for 802.11 a/b/g/n/ac (2x2) WiFi.

The only kryptonite for the ZBook 15 G2 might be that the internal storage capacity of its super-speedy SSD is only 256 GB, which, by today's standards, could be larger to accommodate more scratch disk space. For an additional $500, HP offers an optional version that includes both an SSD and a 1-TB, 7200-rpm drive. ■

Company: Hewlett-Packard Development Company	Price: $2,499 as tested
Web: www.hp.com	Rating: ◆◆◆◆◇

▲ Hot: Speed/performance; DTS audio; display quality; connectivity ports

▼ Not: SSD capacity

▼ Rosco Flash Packs and Filter Kits

Tinted Filters for Hot-Shoe and Studio Strobes
Review by Michael Corsentino

Legendary gel and diffusion fabric manufacturer, Rosco Laboratories, which offers more than 1,200 gels and fabrics for photographers, filmmakers, architects, and the theatrical market, has introduced several new Flash Packs and Filter Kits for hot-shoe flashes, larger studio strobes, continuous lights, and LEDs.

With so many filters to choose from, it can be daunting to know where to start or what the results will be (aside from the usual suspect filters such as Color Temperature Orange). Realizing this, Rosco has created an ingenious set of Filter Kits for photographers and videographers. Organized by their intended use, each pack brings together the best and brightest that Rosco has to offer, and helps remove the mystery.

Hot-shoe flash users have four Rosco Flash Packs to choose from: the Strobist Collection (created in collaboration with David Hobby); the Beauty pack with hand-selected filters to enhance skin tones; CalColor for exact color control with primary and secondary colored filters; and the Digital After Dark pack with specialized filters for nighttime photography and light painting. Flash Pack filters are 1.5x5.5", and sets include two bands for easily attaching filters to your flash.
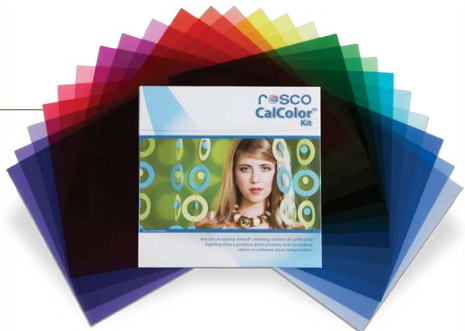
For larger studio lights, Rosco's eight 12x12" Filter Kits are the ticket. Use the Color Correction kit to balance studio lights on location; soften, sculpt, and texture light with the Diffusion kit; or use the Cinegel Sampler kit for a blend of color correction and diffusion options. Add vibrant contrasting colors using the Color Effects kit; produce primary and secondary lighting effects with the CalColor kit; and take your night photography to the next level with the Digital After Dark kit. Choose from the Beauty kit's hand-selected filters to enhance skin tones, and get the essential filters every photographer needs with the Photo Lighting kit. ■

Company: Rosco Laboratories	Price: Flash Packs: $24.95; Filter Kits: $34.95–59.95
Web: www.rosco.com	Rating: ◆◆◆◆◇

▲ Hot: Clearly organized packs help remove the mystery

▼ Not: Example photos for each gel would be helpful

▼ Phottix Indra500 TTL Light

Battery-Powered Studio Light
Review by Michael Corsentino

The mono light space is heating up, and that's good news for consumers. Phottix has a winner on its hands with their recently announced Indra500 TTL Light, an on-the-go strobe that's safe to call "the complete package." Why? Simply because the Indra500 TTL Light includes all the must-have features for which the masses have been clamoring but not getting from manufacturers who've already come to market with similar offerings and left people waiting and wanting.

At 500 Ws, the Indra500 TTL Light is no slouch in the power department. Then add TTL capability and built-in triggering for both Canon and Nikon DSLRs via Phottix's Odin TTL Flash Trigger technology, and things start to get really interesting. It doesn't stop there. The Indra500 TTL Light is also the first product brought to market featuring high-speed sync (HSS), providing top sync speeds up to 1/8000. TTL shooters rejoice! That alone is a game changer, but the amenities continue with the Indra500's dual-power options that allow operation via its included li-ion battery or AC adapter, making it the perfect light for location and studio use. I call that a win-win.

Rounding out this awesome light, additional features include an 8-stop power range; Manual and Stroboscopic modes; Second Curtain Sync; ±3 EV adjustments; manual power from 1/128 to full power in 1/3-stop increments; an LED modeling light; a built-in Phottix Strato II Receiver; 400 full-power shots using the 5000 mAh Indra battery pack; and 2-second recycle times. At just under 5 lbs, the Indra500 TTL Light packs a punch. ■

Company: Phottix	Price: $1,295
Web: www.phottix.com	Rating: ◆◆◆◆◇

▲ Hot: Portable; AC/DC power; TTL; HSS; Canon- and Nikon-compatible

▼ Not: Adjustments in 1/10-stop increments would be nice

▼ Tiffen Steadicam CURVE for GoPro

Compact, Handheld Camera Stabilizer
Review by Rod Harlan

The Steadicam CURVE for GoPro is designed specifically for one-handed GoPro camera shoots. Weighing in at just half a pound, the CURVE is the perfect companion for those looking to get Steadicam's stabilization technology in a compact package.

The frame, made from lightweight, durable aluminum, includes a standard GoPro quick-release mount. The design includes a collapsible handle for compact storage and portability, or for use as a GoPro hand grip. There's also a fine-tune adjustment knob for precise balance control, and the unit comes in four colors: black, blue, red, and silver. The Steadicam CURVE works with all GoPro HERO cameras, but some models require the LCD BacPac or the Optional Curve Weight Kit ($12.95). Check out all available options for your particular GoPro camera on Tiffen's Steadicam CURVE Compatibility Chart (**www.tiffen.com/steadicam_curve_compatibility.html**). The chart is difficult to read, and I'd prefer that they made something easier to understand.

Don't expect to get perfectly smooth footage the first time you shoot with the Steadicam CURVE. As well as fine-tuning the balance, you'll also need to get comfortable walking with bended knees and a lower center of gravity—this is true for all Steadicams.

One area of disappointment I came across was in relation to wind. Both the GoPro and the CURVE are too lightweight to handle even a moderate amount of wind. For shooting on those days, you'll need to find a way to block the majority of the wind from affecting your GoPro/CURVE setup. But even with this limitation, the Steadicam CURVE for GoPro is a great addition to your GoPro HERO camera accessory bag. ■

Company: The Tiffen Company	Price: $99.95
Web: **www.tiffen.com**	Rating: ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◇

▲ Hot: Steadicam's stabilization technology in a compact size

▼ Not: Doesn't perform well in moderate wind

▼ Photomatix Essentials 4

High Dynamic Range for Amateurs
Review by Erik Vlietinck

Photomatix Essentials 4 is an entry-level, easy-to-use, standalone application to create HDR images. The adjustments are basic and more or less limited to selecting from the presets, which range from natural to artistic. The app is the amateur version of Photomatix Pro—still by far the best HDR app on the market.

Photomatix Essentials allows you to merge to HDR and apply tone mapping. New features in version 4 include Exposure Fusion for more natural-looking images (you can automatically align hand-held photos and remove ghosts), and Finishing Touch, which lets you add a bit of sharpness and has a button to start over again.

The startup screen of Photomatix Essentials 4 guides you through the workflow, giving you only a couple of options from which to choose. I tested it with three images, and opted for the full automatic workflow. In this mode, you can still adjust a couple of things, such as manual alignment, if necessary. Oddly enough, the startup screen doesn't mention that there's a limit of five photos you can use to create your HDR image with the Essentials version.

Photomatix Essentials lacks the ability to export true 32-bit HDR images, so all you can do is tone map the result to render on standard monitor screens—probably what most people will want to do.
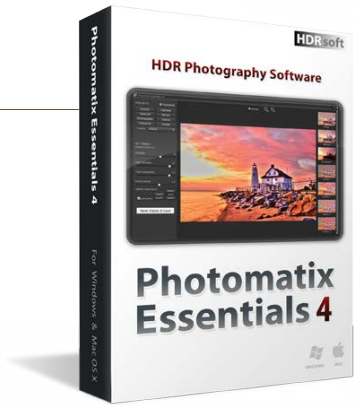
HDRsoft masters tone mapping like no other, and it's not hard to quickly create a good-looking HDR image with Photomatix Essentials 4. The included Fusion/Natural algorithm ensures realism for most HDR images, but it lacks the Fusion/Real-Estate setting for natural rendering of indoor scenes with light shining through windows.

Using Photomatix Essentials 4, you can create faux-HDR images from one photo, but only the tone mapping settings will be available. ■

Company: HDRsoft	Price: $39
Web: **www.hdrsoft.com**	Rating: ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

▲ Hot: Ease of use; useful presets; excellent for beginners

▼ Not:
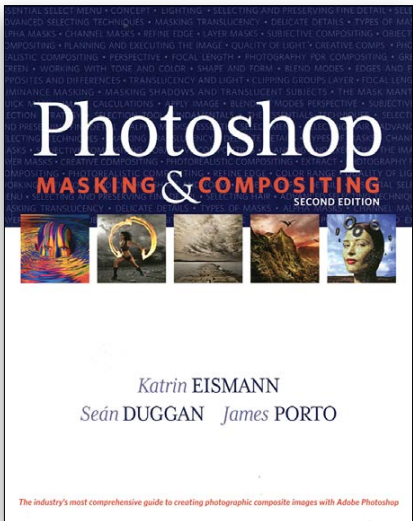
Photoshop Masking & Compositing, 2nd Edition
By Katrin Eismann, Seán Duggan, James Porto

It seems with the Creative Cloud subscription model that Photoshop is almost a living creature, growing and evolving every few weeks. That presents problems for authors—how do you keep your printed book (or ePub) relevant? Obviously authors can't discuss features added to the program after the book goes to the printer. What authors *can* do is produce a masterful book that covers critical tasks in depth, using the most important and commonly used features in Photoshop. Combining elements from two or more images into a single composite, and having that composite look natural (or intentionally unnatural, such as much of the work of Jerry Uelsmann and John Paul Caponigro) is explored and explained in this book. The authors discuss (and include exercises for) photographing images you intend to composite (including lighting, backgrounds, perspective, and scale), the critical skills of selecting and masking, and the art of putting the pieces together.
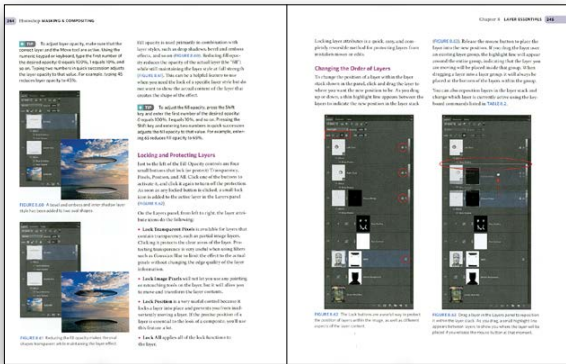
Publisher: New Riders	Pages: 487
Website: **www.newriders.com**	
▶ Price: $59.99	▶ Rating: ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆
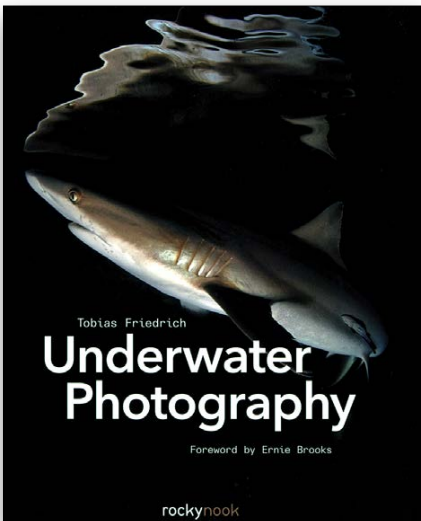
Underwater Photography
By Tobias Friedrich

Yes, some parts of this book and almost all of the photographs are specific to underwater photography, but the author also discusses photographic topics that apply to most of us. The original German title of the book is *Die Kunst der Unterwasserfotografie* (The Art of Underwater Photography) which, when looking at the beautiful and sometimes startling photographs, seems to be more appropriate. But don't worry about the translation of the text (by David Schlesinger)—it's clear and accurate. Among the topics explained in ways that are not specific to underwater photography are aperture, shutter speed, and ISO; file formats; white balance; composition, perspective, and compositing; wide-angle and macro photography; and image editing. (The author considers most underwater photography to be documentary in nature—no pun intended—and therefore takes an absolute minimalist approach to editing.)
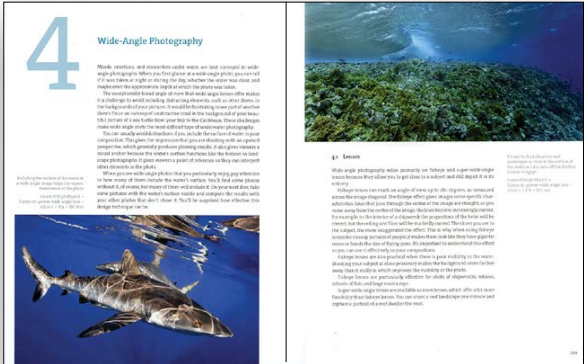
Publisher: Rocky Nook	Pages: 206
Website: **www.rockynook.com**	
▶ Price: $39.95	▶ Rating: ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◈

Photoshop Tips
boost your productivity and creativity

COLIN SMITH

▶ It's that time again. You're looking at this tips column and wondering if there's anything useful for you, or maybe something that you don't know yet. I guarantee there's something in this issue's tips that's new to you and will be plenty useful. So read on and happy tipping. By the way, Photoshop tipping is so much more fun than cow tipping. (I'm in a good mood today; it could be that I'm at 30,000' and on my way somewhere fun, so I apologize in advance for my dry jokes.)

Visually Changing Your Document Size
When you create a blank document and you want it to be larger or smaller, you can either go to Image>Image Size or you can do it visually onscreen. I'm sure you've already guessed that you can use the Crop tool to scale a document down, but how do you make a document bigger? The answer is the same: the Crop tool. This is useful when you're compositing and you need more screen real estate to create an effect. Press C to choose the Crop tool, zoom out so you can see the entire document, and drag the crop boundary outside the image area into the canvas. Press Enter to apply.

Layers in the Library
If you're on the Creative Cloud version of Photoshop, let me ask you a question: Are you as excited as I am about Libraries? Finally, we have reusable assets right at our fingertips! I use this feature every day. After kicking around with Libraries for a while, I know I can only save one layer at a time. Or can I? I could nest a bunch of layers into a smart object and drag the smart object from the document into the Libraries panel to save it, but when I drag that smart object into a new document, I still have to open the smart object to access all the layers. So, I wondered what would happen if I save a layer group as a Library object. Yep, it works! All you need to do is throw all your layers into a layer group (Command-G [PC: Ctrl-G]) and drag the layer group from the document into the Libraries panel. Now you have all those layers at your fingertips whenever you want them.

Pixel-Perfect Lens Flare Placement
Lens flares in photographs are as common as Toyota Prii in California. My first subtip to warm you up is this: when using the Lens Flare filter, use Hue/Saturation and change the color to something different. Oh yeah, also make sure that you're adding it to a backlit photo, or else it doesn't make sense, as lens flares have to come directly for the light source. Okay, here's the real tip—getting pixel-perfect lens flare placement. In recent versions of Photoshop, lens flares have become easier to work with because you now have an image preview for placement in the Lens Flare dialog. But how do you get the placement exact? The first step is to note the coordinates where you want to place the lens flare. For this, choose the Info panel (Window>Info), put your cursor

exactly where you want the flare, and take notice of the X and Y values. (*Note:* If your values aren't set to pixels, click the disclosure triangle to the left of the coordinates and choose Pixels.) Step Two is to apply the lens flare: Filter>Render>Lens Flare. Now, hold down Option (PC: Alt) and click in the preview window. You'll see a dialog pop up called Precise Flare Center. Type in the X and Y values, click OK twice, and bang! Perfect placement.

Steal My Settings
A lot of people are aware that you can copy layer styles, layer masks, etc. between layers in the same document. To copy an asset from one layer to another, Option-drag (PC: Alt-drag) it. To move it, simply drag it from one layer to another. But what if you want to move it from one document to another? Here's the scoop: You can copy layers, layer groups, smart objects, layer masks, layer styles, text, shapes, paths, and alpha channels from one document to another by dragging the asset from the Layers panel (Channels panel for alpha channels, Paths panel for paths) and dropping it into the middle of the other document. This is useful for many things, including working on low-res comps, then building out full-size images such as billboards and reusing the assets from the comps. Choosing Window>Arrange and selecting 2-up Vertical to view the documents side by side will help a lot.

Help! I'm Using a Wacom Tablet and the Brush Options Don't Work
There are two brush options in the Options Bar for pen pressure. One turns pen pressure on and off for opacity and the other turns pen pressure on and off for size. But what happens when you turn off the option for opacity in the Options Bar, and it seems that the opacity is still being controlled by pen pressure? Is it broken? Hold that call to tech support; here's how it works. If the brush preset has pen pressure turned on for opacity or size, clicking the icons in the Options Bar to turn off pen pressure will make no difference. If you want to control it from the Options Bar, open the Brush panel (Window>Brush), and turn off the pen pressure options for size and opacity in the Shape Dynamics and Transfer sections. Now, click the little padlocks to the right of Shape Dynamics and Transfer to lock these options. You can now control them from the Options Bar. Just remember if you want to change things like angle, these options will need to be turned back on in the Brush panel. This is a good workflow for retouchers; not so much for digital painters.

Changing the Duration of Motion Graphics
When working with motion graphics or adjustment layers in the Timeline panel, you'll notice that these objects are displayed as purple bars. These are added on the timeline wherever the
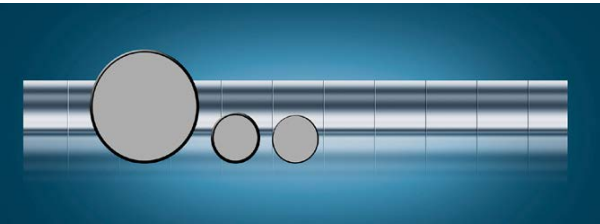
playhead is at the time of creation. It's easy to change their position or duration. To change position, click-and-drag them to a different location on the timeline. The duration is just as easy: click-and-drag the beginning or the end to stretch or shrink the duration.

Cleaning Up Your Desk
If you're the kind of person who's told repeatedly by your boss to clean up your desk, perhaps you think you thrive in chaos. If that's the case, I imagine you have a million icons on your computer desktop and your panels are everywhere in Photoshop. Every time you want to do something in Photoshop, you have to drag a panel out of the way. Guilty? Sorry, I can't help with your desk or icon problem, but I can help with your panels and Photoshop layout. The first thing you need to do is set aside 10 minutes and create some workspaces. Open the panels that you want to use and position them, and close all the panels that you don't need. At the far right of the Options Bar, click on the workspace drop-down menu, select New Workspace, name it, and click Save. Rinse and repeat as many times as you need for different workspaces. This is where it gets good. When you see a lot of clutter, choose Reset [name of workspace] from that same drop-down menu and bing! Instant cleanliness. You can even go to Edit>Keyboard Shortcuts, create a keyboard shortcut for Reset Essentials under Window in the Application Menu Commands, and it will work on all workspaces. I use Command-Shift-Option-C (PC: Ctrl-Shift-Alt-C) because I don't really need a shortcut for Edit>Content-Aware Scale anyway. Now, if I could just find the keyboard shortcut to clean my room.

Layer Styles, to Scale or not to Scale?
You may or may not be aware of this but when you transform the size of an object that has a layer style attached to it, the object will scale, but the layer style will stubbornly keep its settings and not scale with everything else. For example, if you have a 5-px bevel on an edge, it will stay at 5 px no matter how large or small you make your object. If you want the layer style to scale with the object, it's really quite simple. Simply Right-click on the layer name in the Layers panel and choose Convert to Smart Object. Now that you have a smart object, the layer style will happily scale with everything else now. ■

ALL IMAGES BY COLIN SMITH

Photoshop USER

January 2015

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While every attempt has been made to make this listing as complete as possible, its accuracy cannot be guaranteed.

From The Help Desk

I recently complained about being forced to use tabs when multiple images are open in Photoshop and a colleague suggested that I disable that feature in the program's Preferences. How do I do that?—Vanessa

**To: Vanessa
From: KelbyOne Help Desk**

Photoshop automatically creates tabbed image windows when multiple files are open. The tabs align along the top of the work area and only one image can be visible at a time. To see more than one image at a time, drag a tab away from the top of the work area to "float" the window, use one of the Window>Arrange commands to tile or float images, or you can disable the feature completely in the Preferences.

Command-K (PC: Ctrl-K) is the shortcut to open the Preferences dialog. Tabbed image windows are disabled in the Interface panel of the Preferences (where you can also disable the option to create tabbed images accidentally when dragging windows around—deselect Enable Floating Document Window Docking). While Photoshop has dozens of options in the various Preferences panels, below are some that I consider most important.

In the General panel, activate the History Log and record the detailed log to the file's metadata. In File>File Info or in Bridge you can then see a record of everything you've done to that file.

In the Interface panel, in addition to disabling tabbed image windows, you can change the font size for the user interface (UI), making it larger for big monitors and tiny for smaller screens. And if you don't like seeing the transformation values (the small box to the upper right of the cursor as you drag things around), you can set it to Never.

If you use Photoshop on multiple machines, you can elect to sync various things (or nothing) through the Creative Cloud in the Sync Settings panel.

The File Handling panel offers quite a few options, including direct access to the Camera Raw Preferences and options for how often to auto-save your work.

The Performance panel is the place to fiddle with graphics processor settings if you're having display problems. (No problems? Don't change any graphic processor options.) I also visit this panel to change the image cache from the default of 4 to 1 so I'm always looking at the actual pixels rather than a cached approximation.

If you have more than one internal hard drive, you can use the Scratch Disks panel to set the second drive as the primary scratch disk to speed things up a bit. (Use only internal drives for scratch disks.)

In the Cursors panel, I like to show a crosshair in the brush tip so that when I'm zoomed in *really* far, I still know where my brush is working.

In Transparency & Gamut, you might want to change the grid colors if you work with a lot of grayscale images.

Rather than changing measurement units in the Units & Rulers panel, I show the rulers (Command-R [PC: Ctrl-R]) in the document, then Right-click on a Ruler to pick a unit.

Working with the grid and smart guides helps make sure your layout is precise. Set the appearance and grid line frequency in Guides, Grid & Slices.

In the Plug-Ins panel, you can enable Generator if you create Web graphics. You can also opt to show all the Filter Gallery filters in the main Filter menu.

Among the remaining Preferences, Windows 8 users might want to scale the UI to 200% in Experimental Features. ■

The KelbyOne Member
HELP DESKS

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