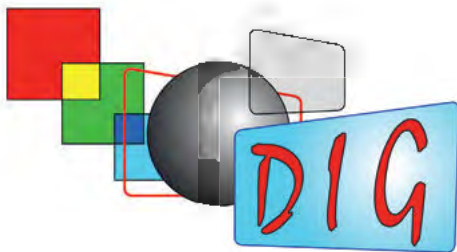


THE **RPS**
ROYAL
PHOTOGRAPHIC
SOCIETY



DIGIT

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY
DIGITAL IMAGING GROUP NO. 62: 2014 Issue 3



UPCOMING DI GROUP EVENTS

Details of all DIG events are available on the Group's website at:

www.rps.org/special-interest-groups/digital-imaging/events

Some future events include:

DI Group Thames Valley

Sunday 19th October 2014

Woosehill Community Hall, Emmview Close,
Wokingham RG41 3DA

Final details to be confirmed – please check website.

DI Group Annual Print Exhibition

01 October 2014 – 31 October 2014

Smethwick Photographic Society
Club Rooms, The Old School House,
Churchbridge, Oldbury B69 2AS

A wide cross-section of work from members of this RPS Group. The Exhibition is this year's Selectors' choice from all of the prints submitted, with at least one print accepted from every entrant. This Exhibition will travel to various venues in the UK.

PLEASE NOTE that the dates for this exhibition venue are currently PROVISIONAL, and that opening hours are yet TO BE CONFIRMED.

Contact: Marilyn Taylor ARPS

Email: digexhibitions@rps.org

Cost: Free

DI Group Southern Centre: David

Mallows- Adobe Photoshop Workshop

Sunday 16 November 2014

Greyfriars Community Centre,
44 Christchurch Road, Ringwood, BH24 1DW

This lecture workshop is aimed primarily at intermediate to advanced users of Photoshop and a working familiarity with the menus and use of layers will be anticipated. Topics covered will include as time permits: -

- Adobe Camera Raw adjustment tools
- Advanced layers and layer masks
- Retouching tools for portraits
- Selections
- Creating composites
- Adjustments using frequency separations.

David Mallows is a professional photographer and re-toucher. He is an Adobe Certified trainer. Many of the examples used for demonstration will be from his professional work.

Time: 10.30 – 1600

Contact: Dr Barry Senior Hon FRPS

Email: digsouthern@rps.org

Cost: DIG Members £6, RPS Members £10,
Non RPS Members £10

Booking Form: Download from website

Advanced Booking Strongly Recommended

DI Group Thames Valley: Member Presentations + Millennium Cup

Competition for Prints

Sunday 23 November 2014

Woosehill Community Hall, Emmview Close,
Wokingham RG41 3DA

- Millennium Cup Competition for Prints
- "This year ... next year": a summary by your Centre Organiser
- Open Forum – your turn to speak.

Time: 10:00 – 15:30

Contact: Laurie Pate

Email: digthamesvalley@rps.org

Cost: DIG Members £6, RPS Members £10,
Non RPS Members £10

DI Group Western – Gavin Hoey Live Demonstration

Sunday 14 December 2014

Clyst St Mary Village Hall, Clyst St Mary,
Nr Exeter EX5 1BG

What better way to learn more about the latest techniques in photography and Photoshop than by watching a live demonstration from Gavin Hoey? He aims to educate, inspire and entertain. This is an all day live demonstration special event which is being held at Clyst St Mary Village Hall, Near Exeter, EX5 1BG Lunch 13.00 – 14.00 and packed lunches are advisable although there is public house and corner shop nearby. Doors open at 10.00

Time: 10.30 – 1600

Contact: Janet Haines ARPS

Email: digwestern@rps.org

Cost: DIG Members £6, RPS Members £8,
Non RPS Members £10

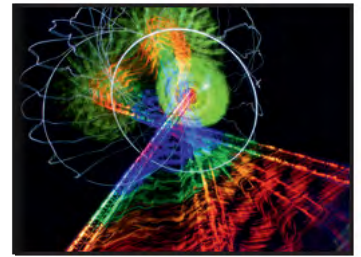




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COVER IMAGE:

Kilchurn Castle by Ian Tully ARPS

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digiteditor@rps.org

Thanks go to John Lewis LRPS, my Assistant Editor, for his invaluable technical and general help in the production of this issue of DIGIT. Also thanks to Joanne Lewis and Anthony Healy ARPS.

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The views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the RPS DIG.

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EDITORIAL



Accompanying this issue of DIGIT is a Monograph dedicated to Eddy Sethna FRPS who was one of the pioneers or founding fathers of digital imaging. Eddy gave great service to the photographic community in lecturing and judging and served for many years on the Council of the Royal Photographic Society and was Vice President for two years. In 2004 he was awarded the Fenton Medal and Honorary membership for his outstanding contribution to the RPS. He was also Vice Chairman of the RPS Digital Imaging Group for a number of years and the first Chairman of the then Midlands RPS Digital Imaging Group (MIDIG).

Here in DIGIT No 62: 2014 Issue 3 we are paying tribute to John Long ARPS, recently awarded an Honorary Life Membership of DIG, who is one of our longest-serving members. He has contributed many years of service as a committee member in various

roles. Margaret Salisbury has written an appreciation of his service and John himself has provided some of his favourite images for us to enjoy.

I heard recently that there might be a misconception that DIG is just about montaged images. That is certainly not true – we embrace all genres of photography and welcome members of all abilities from beginners to advanced. Some individual members may specialise, for example in landscapes, portraits or natural history, but we all aim to improve our digital techniques regardless of whether we produce ‘straight’ images or manipulated ones.

In our recent Projected Image Competition we had far more entries in the Open section than in the Creative section, confirming that our interests are diverse. All of the successful images that were accepted by our selectors will be featured in DIGIT No 63: 2014 Issue 4

which will be published later this year.

Admittedly some of us enjoy ‘playing’ on the computer, perhaps trying to produce creative images. Viveca Koh tells us the story behind her recent successful FRPS panel, in which she made use of texture layers and multiple overlays to produce her creative images.

In the ‘Back to Basics’ series, Clive Haynes FRPS discusses some of the considerations when making montages and there is also a page with a few very basic tips that might be useful.

I hope readers will agree that I am trying to keep the content of DIGIT as varied as possible. If there is a topic that I haven’t covered that you would like to write about, please send me an email.

Carole Lewis ARPS digiteditor@rps.org



FROM THE CHAIR

What is your approach to your photography? Are you the guy who is technically adept both with your software and camera equipment or do you approach it totally from the viewpoint of light and emotions?

There is no right or wrong – often our own character leans us one way or another, dictating what we like shooting and often we stay in our comfort zone a little too much. Trying something else challenges us and we fear we might have some failures if we don’t stick to the tried and tested, but failure is good.

I suggest to you that we learn more from failure than we ever do from winning the medals, so long as we are big enough to learn from the experience.

If you have an image you like and it isn’t doing as well as you think it should, be really critical of it. We are often our own best judges, as only we know how we want our art to look. But we need to try to be truly objective about our work. Is it too flat,

have you introduced halos, could you crop it to make it a stronger composition, would it look better as a mono? The possibilities are endless. But also take the views of others whom you respect, whether that is club colleagues, through online forums or judges. All views are valid and from them you learn if you listen well.

Next you need to consider trying to make some changes to the work and experimenting a little. ‘Experimenting’ might even mean that you need to learn a new technique. There is so much out there on the web that I doubt there is anything you can think of that someone won’t have made a tutorial for. So ‘Google’ it. Or it might mean recognizing that you need to go and shoot it again in a better light, or use a filter or different camera settings. Perhaps you need to give more direction to your models to get the emotional input from them that you desire. Often reshooting just isn’t a possibility, in which case you are stuck with your original file; but that doesn’t mean it cannot be improved.

So give yourself some time with one of your images that you like but which has room for improvement. Fail through it: learn from it. At the end of the day it is great to put the ‘before’ and ‘after’ side by side and see for yourself what you can achieve, with just a little bit of extra effort.

Finally, on a different subject, it was my pleasure and delight to present the very first Honorary DIG membership to John Long ARPS on behalf of all members and the committee at a meeting at the RPS, Fenton House, Bath on 27 August 2014.

In the words of Jim Buckley who worked alongside John as a previous DIGIT Editor but was unable to attend: “To a great man, a great and appropriate award. Well done John. You have inspired so many photographers over the years and done so selflessly, quietly and professionally. This award shows just how much the Digital Imaging Group owes you and how highly you are regarded by so many friends.”

Janet Haines ARPS digchair@rps.org

HONOURING JOHN LONG ARPS



John Long was awarded the first Honorary Life Membership of DIG recently to acknowledge the many years of service that he has given to our Group. John was surprised and delighted at this honour and since then has provided some of his favourite images to accompany this article by Margaret Salisbury, who explains that his contribution to the photographic world as a whole is even greater.



Janet Haines ARPS presenting John Long ARPS with his Honorary Life Membership certificate
Photo by Barry Senior FRPS

The Digital Imaging Group (DIG), in honouring John Long with Honorary Life Membership, is acknowledging just one aspect of the contribution that John has made to the Photographic World.

John joined the DIG in 1998 just one year after the first meeting and, since then has hosted many Committee Meetings in his own home, has given support and encouragement to all those involved, as well as helping Members in so many ways that it's impossible to relate them all. His

significant contributions include working on the DIG Exhibition, managing the publicity and website information, and always being there whenever he was needed or whenever he could help the Group to become the successful and enjoyable Group it is today. I have known John for more than 30 years and, as all who know him will testify, he is one of the most generous, kind and caring men you could ever meet. In asking those who know John for information, many tributes were made such as: "John is a shining example of a good Volunteer; when he

is asked to do anything he always does it both willingly and efficiently", "John's contributions to Photography have been a lifetime of service to the work of the RPS, the Groups and his own Photographic Society helping Members to progress and supporting all who seek his wise counsel and practical advice. John is always there to help beginners and encourages everyone who needs help to achieve their aim whether it be in Club competitions Distinctions or other achievements", and "John is a constant source of inspiration to newcomers to Digital Imaging, displaying



Autumn



Bottles in the Window



Girl and Swirls

a tireless enthusiasm for hard work coupled with infinite patience in helping others master digital photography despite his own busy life".

John took up Photography in 1949 and joined the Kingswood Photographic Society in 1955 where he has been a loyal and faithful member, including serving as Hon. Secretary for 43 years and President for 10 years. Providing accommodation and hospitality for Speakers visiting Kingswood Photographic Society and other events has become legendary, all without asking for anything in return.

For 50 years John lectured and judged, was an Evening Class Tutor, Demonstrator of Studio Portraiture and Lighting, as well as being an active photographer himself, travelling and producing AV sequences, and Assessing Distinctions. All this and more has been, and much still is, part of John's life.

John is a talented and excellent photographer who, after a number of years doing Mono printing and Slides, started Digital Photography in 1995. John was producing Creative Composite Images and winning awards as long ago as 1996 (see '**Autumn**') and continues making Creative images, which have won awards (see '**Bottles in the Window**') as well as enjoying Portraiture, Figure Study, Landscapes/ Seascapes, Travel and Wedding Photography as well as AV Sequences.

John joined the Royal Photographic Society (RPS) in 1979, was awarded an LRPS with Prints in 1980, followed by an ARPS with a Slide submission in 1990. His interest in Distinctions resulted in his giving many years and hundreds of hours service to the RPS Distinctions working as a 'Scribe' for numerous Panels in many if not all the Sections of Distinctions. Arguably, it is believed that he has seen more panels assessed than almost anyone else including members of the Staff of the RPS.

John served on the Licentiate panel as a Member of the Panel for four years followed by six years as Chairman. During this time he not only offered help on Assessment days for those unsuccessful entrants but also continued to Mentor all those who asked for or needed his help for many weeks or months until they achieved the Distinction.

In recognition of John's service to the RPS, in 2001 he was awarded the Fenton Medal and Hon. Life Membership of the RPS; he continued much of this work for years after receiving the award.

John is still involved with Assessments in that he is a Panel Member of the Disabled Photographers Society Assessment Panel for L, A and F Distinctions, is the Administrator, receiving and returning submitted panels and sees everything is in place to ensure the Assessment days run without problems.

It is impossible to list all John's achievements and contributions made continuously for 60 years to 'the photographic world', so it gave me much pleasure to see the presentation of the 'Hon. DIG' Certificate to John, this true gentleman who so richly deserves it. I count myself very lucky to have such a true and loyal friend, and know I am just one of many who value his friendship.

All images on pages 6 and 7 are by John Long



Dragon Sisters



Evening Fishing



Hank



Harley Man

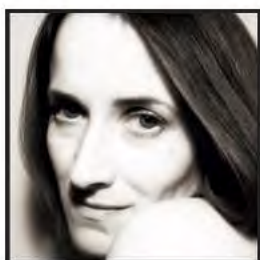


Smiling in the Rain

LAYERS OF MEANING: A CREATIVE APPROACH



Siren's Song



Viveca Koh explains how the commission to illustrate her uncle's book of poetry and prose eventually developed into the basis of her recent successful FRPS panel of 20 images, some of which are illustrated here. She describes how she uses texture layers and multiple overlays in Photoshop to combine various images together to make the final images that please her.

I have considered myself to be a fine art photographer for a few years, mainly based upon the fact that many of my photographs have evolved and developed gradually over time into artistic and quite painterly images, as I began to experiment with the use of texture overlays and multiple layers in Photoshop. This technique

currently forms the basis for all of my work, although I expect it to change in the future, as I enjoy trying different techniques and have no wish to become stuck in a photographic rut. Seeing is a huge part of the photographic experience but expressing that vision is also very important to me, and I believe that there are many ways of

doing this. As I learn more about Photoshop I realise how much potential there is for processing photographs in different ways and how I can utilise the programme to bring my ideas to life.

Having said this I always try to get the initial photograph right in camera,

especially when it comes to exposure and composition. One of the things that I love so much about taking photographs is firstly spotting my subject matter and then deciding how to frame it within my camera's viewfinder. It might sound daft but this part of the whole process is immensely enjoyable for me, and I am always so absorbed when I am taking photographs that I am barely aware of anything else, yet the post-production work that follows is equally pleasurable. I've heard some photographers say that they cannot bear the computer-work element of digital photography and they will spend as little time on it as possible, making the minimum number of tweaks and adjustments, but I love it as much as the actual picture taking – I regard myself to be quite fortunate in that respect!

As a photographer I am very attracted to the details, the smaller parts of a whole picture, sometimes insignificant and overlooked elements and also things that others might find less savoury – dirt, decay, dead things and dereliction, which seem to have a strange pull on my attention. I have a tendency to incorporate all of these into my work quite frequently.

Over time I have collected quite an extensive database of my own photographs that I use as overlays, which includes subjects such as skies, fabric, old wallpaper, cracked and peeling paint, postcards, documents of varying types to name but a few, and I will use these as a separate layer over my base photograph in Photoshop. Some of my layered images are relatively simple, containing no more than half a dozen layers, others can be more complex, but all generally feature the use of layer masks which is the method I use for the fine blending of one layer with another.

I had been perfecting this combination of ideas and techniques for a few months when my uncle commissioned me to illustrate, in a book, his latest collection of poetry and prose, after he saw one of the books I had previously created and self-published via Blurb. This book 'Star Blossom' was to become the basis of my Fellowship panel although I didn't immediately realise this, and it was only when I had produced a number of illustrations for the book that I thought they might be of the right standard. From a personal perspective, I felt that they were sufficiently different from my Associateship submission (gained in June 2011) but, more importantly, much further evolved in demonstrating my vision and creative development as a photographer.



Shop Window



Translation



His Heart Listens



With Imprisoned Wish



Star Hair



A Mirror Wall of Words

Someone asked me very recently whether I have an idea in my head when I take a photograph as to how I will process it when I sit down in front of my computer. The answer was no, very rarely does this happen, I will usually only decide which textures and additional photographs I will add to another once I review the photos in Lightroom and decide firstly which ones to develop and secondly how to approach this.

Some of my photo illustrations for the book were fairly literal interpretations of the poetry and prose, and required me to go out and photograph mentioned objects and elements, such as the barbed wire ('**With Imprisoned Wish**'), a heap of junk mail ('**A Mirror Wall of Words**') or the scissors and comb ('**Star Hair**'). For the latter I went into the local barber's shop and asked if I could quickly borrow the tools of their trade for a photograph to use 'in a project I was working on', laid them on the table, shot them in natural light and then off I went. I'm sure everyone there thought I was a bit peculiar.

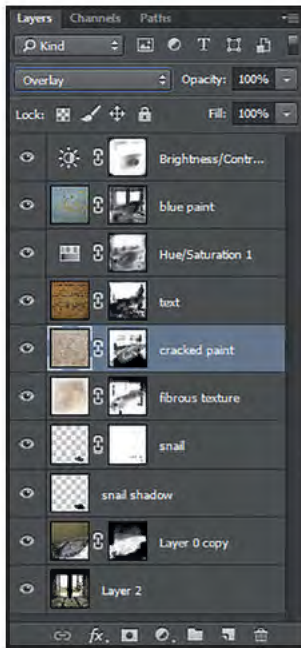
'**No Echo**' is made up from a number of separate elements, the background being one of the cells at Bodmin Gaol, Cornwall, combined with a telephone from an abandoned house, a snail which I shot with my iPhone and several photos of cracked paint along with a layer of reversed text. I am very partial to using text or writing in my images, the actual words very rarely mean anything but I like the way different styles of lettering look in conjunction with the pictorial elements.

I placed all of these elements on separate layers, each using a *Normal* Blending Mode, but once the textures come into play I experimented with different *Blend Modes* to get the effect I was after.

In the example of '**No Echo**', the fibrous texture layer uses *Color Burn*, the cracked paint *Overlay*, the text *Soft Light* and the blue paint *Multiply*.

If I need to make any changes to *Brightness/Contrast* or *Hue/Saturation* for example, I always use *Adjustment Layers* so that the original base photograph is not altered in any way. These can easily be turned on or off, masked where necessary or simply deleted if the effect does not work.

I make extensive use of masking as shown in the black and white thumbnails on the *Layers Panel* example, so that I am totally in control of which parts of every single layer affect the final image. These were the fundamental techniques that I used for all photographs in my panel.



Layers Panel for 'No Echo'



No Echo

In this respect my use of Photoshop is relatively simple. I consider it to be a giant iceberg of a programme with lots going on under the surface i.e. many tools that one may never use. I am always willing to learn more through extensive reading and watching tutorial videos online, so I wouldn't surprise myself to be applying some new technique to the processing of my photographs in future that may give them a completely different look and feel to the one that I have now. I'm really happy with that idea.

One of the aspects of using multiple layers that I enjoy so much is the ability to transform mundane objects into an entirely alternative character, to something unexpected and even beautiful in its new context.

'Other Lives' features an oil painting portrait of a woman that I photographed in a derelict house, overlaid with a separate photograph of a very ripped and ratty net curtain, which made the circular pattern texture.

'Sirens' Song' (See page 8) is some old postcards layered with a shot of barnacles on a rock by the sea, since the whole poem is themed along these lines.

'Star Loss' shows a Christmas decoration which I photographed without ceremony against my study window, and then superimposed it onto a separate rooftop shot, with an additional 'texture' of condensation on the side of a pint of beer to mimic the same on the glass of a window.



Other Lives



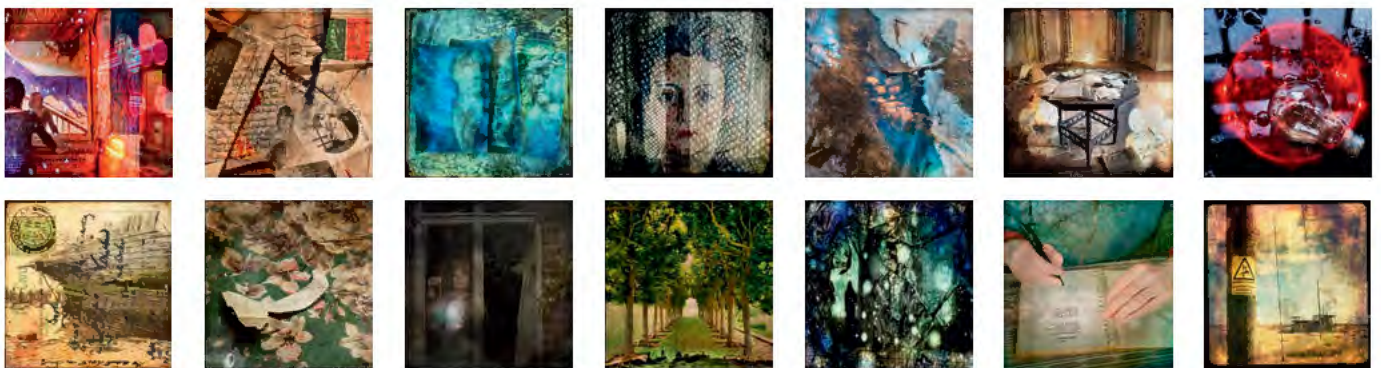
Star Loss



The Princess

The sparkling bokeh texture in 'The Princess' came from my fibre-optic lamp that I photographed quite close up with an aperture of f2.8 so that much of it was out of focus. It gives me a huge amount of satisfaction to 'art up' the dull, dreary and unloved in this way.

My hope for the panel is that these twenty photo illustrations can be viewed as a set of images that work well together, pictorial in their own right thus allowing the viewer to make up their own stories to go with them. When seen in conjunction with my Uncle's poetry and prose they may become more 'obvious' and answer some of those questions "why?", but ultimately they are a flight of the imagination, slightly enigmatic and strange, asking the viewer to look still further and to think more deeply.



FRPS Panel Layout

THE GENTLE ART OF COMPOSITING



Clive Haynes, a past Chairman of the RPS Digital Imaging Group, is very well known for his talks, lectures and workshops throughout the country. He is primarily interested in 'making pictures' by using photography as a medium of artistic expression. Here he discusses all the aspects that need consideration, and some of techniques that might be employed, when combining images together.

Almost since the dawn of photography, photographers have sought to combine images together. These composite or montage pictures can be made for aesthetic purposes, for reasons of practicality or to produce a 'vision' that exists in only the imagination of the artist.

Digital imaging affords yet more scope for the photographer/artist.

Generally speaking, the more subtle the combination the more pleasing the result. However, some crude 'cut and paste' amalgamations can have a primitive delight all of their own. It all depends upon what you wish to achieve and communicate.

There are many considerations to be made before one begins to combine images and here are some thoughts:

The relative scale of the individual component image

The textural integrity of each component image

The direction of lighting for each component image

The direction and possible addition of shadows

The colour tone of each component image

The 'sincerity' of the overall picture

Most of the problems are best resolved at the 'taking stage' by the art of 'previsualisation' - that is to say, wherever possible, be aware of the final picture you have in mind as you photograph and 'assemble' the various components for the image.

Taking the above topics one at a time, below are thoughts and practical advice.

Scale of the individual images

If you are unable to photograph the images for your composite picture individually at the correct scale for the final result then you will have to alter their relative size in some way. Commonly, people simply re-size the components via the Edit > Transform > Scale route. A small amount of re-sizing is generally acceptable, however this method is not always the best answer, as pixels are either invented or discarded in the process. The final image can suffer a 'definition differential' i.e. some parts being either sharper or fuzzier than others - see 'Textural Integrity' below.

It's possible to overcome this problem to some extent by ensuring, wherever possible, that the individual images for the intended composite picture are as close to the scale required as possible.

Textural Integrity

There are two principal areas: 'Noise' and 'Sharpness'.

'Noise'

When combining images it's considered 'bad practice' to combine a fine, virtually 'noiseless', low ISO (little or no 'grain') image with a 'noisy', high ISO (coarse 'grain') image in the same scene - well, if it's discernible that is. The problem is becoming much less evident as cameras become less and less 'noisy' at higher ISO settings.

Imagine a finely delineated landscape to which a dramatic sky has been added. An example would be where the sky originated from a high ISO setting whilst the landscape was taken at a low ISO value. The evident granular quality of the sky would not sit easily with the image. There would be a lack of 'textural integrity' and the image would be uncomfortable.

Should you be faced with the problem of a too obviously 'noiseless' area in an image

where the noise should be visible to give some veracity, add some 'Noise' via, Filter > Noise > Add Noise; however do this on a separate layer. A better and more flexible method is to make a new (empty) Layer above the problem Layer, fill this with 50% Grey (In Photoshop via Edit > Fill > Use > 50% Grey > OK). Everything will go grey! Next, change the Blend Mode for this Layer from 'Normal' (top LH of Layer Palette) to 'Overlay' (image returns). Next: Go to Filter > Noise > Add Noise, choose 'Gaussian' and tick 'Monochrome'. Adjust the amount to integrate with the image. You can alter the opacity of the Layer and add a Layer Mask to refine the area.

'Sharpness'

Make certain that the components of the image appear to be part of an original scene both in terms of texture and sharpness. Avoid images that look too sharp for their surroundings, and if necessary use softening or blurring to subtly reduce sharpness.

Direction of Lighting

As fundamental as it may appear, many multi-image pictures are ruined by poor attention to lighting and shadow details.

Indoors or under artificial lighting where there are multiple light-sources you may get away with it but outdoors in daylight, where we expect there to be just the one light source i.e. the sun, two or more shadow angles will bring the image into question. Don't forget the direction of the 'key light', as the highlight-side of the area you're working on may also need attention to render the image convincing.

Problems with lighting direction can sometimes be easily overcome by flipping the image horizontally via Edit > Transform > Flip Horizontal. However 'flipping' also reverses any writing, rings on fingers (watch-out Wedding Photographers!), breast-pocket handkerchiefs, watches, etc.



The Op's Room - Original Image



The Op's Room - Edit Image



The Op's Room - Final Image

If it's really difficult to change things without it looking obvious – and Photoshop can't help with *everything* – and if you're in any doubt – don't risk it – someone will notice the error, so choose something else or shoot the required item again.

Shadows

Sometimes the original shadow will need to be stripped away (possibly by using a Layer Mask) and a fresh shadow added. More complex shadows can be added by isolating the subject and applying a new shadow derived from its shape and adjusted via Edit > Transform options. However, frequently, the simple expedient of 'painting in' can work very well. Add a new, empty Layer above the subject and use a soft-edge brush tool at the required size to gently paint in the shadow. 'Painting-in' is easy for a general dark shadow cast on a bright or overcast day but much more demanding under harsh light. A Layer Mask can be added to the 'Shadow Layer' to carefully edit the work.

Colour Tone

This is a similar problem area to lighting. If you're bringing in different images, shot at different times, with different cameras, different settings, indoor/outdoor etc., then it's inevitable that you'll have to make some adjustments to these individual components of the picture. If possible make these adjustments at the RAW editing stage either in Lightroom or Adobe Camera RAW.

If you have to work on post RAW images or jpegs then make these adjustments with an Adjustment Layer for each image concerned. You'll need to make a 'Clipping Group' for each new image layer.

Use one of the following to make these changes and it can be tricky:

- Hue/Saturation
- Color Balance
- Channel mixer

Sincerity

This is probably the most difficult item to discuss, as Photoshop certainly has no such function in its program.

Sincerity is about what you are making with *your* image and what *you intend*. Whilst it's true to say that in art there are really no 'rules', only 'conventions', think seriously about what you are doing – stand back for a moment and consider:

Is the effect you're striving to achieve rooted in some form of reality?

Will it confuse or intrigue the viewer?

Is the overall effect merely an effect for its own sake – in the “I can do it, so I will – aren’t I a clever person!” school of art?

Yes, we’ve all done it, we’ve all been there and we’ve all seen images of strange and distorted faces and wings fitted to things and the like.

Think to yourself:

When I’ve completed this picture, will it add up?

Will it tell us more about the object/scene/ emotion/person portrayed or extend our knowledge in some way?

Will it be amusing and intriguing or simply weird and confusing?

Will it be true to its own internal logic?

When entering the realm you’ve created, will viewers willingly suspend their disbelief?

Sincerity is a vast issue and there are no black and white answers, only shades of grey.

The important thing is not to get carried away with an idea or series of effects for their own sake. Try to remain faithful to your internal vision and not to be sidetracked by the weird and wonderful things you can superimpose on a scene.

The most telling pieces of work are those with a simple and direct message, delivered in an uncluttered way.

The intrinsic problem with making the statements above is that many examples can be found that appear to contradict them. At least I hope I’ve made you stop and consider.

Finally, when you’ve completed your masterpiece, leave it for a while then return to it. If when you view it your conclusion is: “that’ll do” – it most certainly won’t. Be critical; others will be less forgiving. Exercise ‘quality control’ at all stages.

Remember, what you’re aiming for can be summed up in just seven words, “Fidelity of representation with insistence upon detail.”

For more information about Layer Masks, Adjustment Layers, Adding and Managing Shadows, visit the Know-How section of my website at www.crhfoto.co.uk



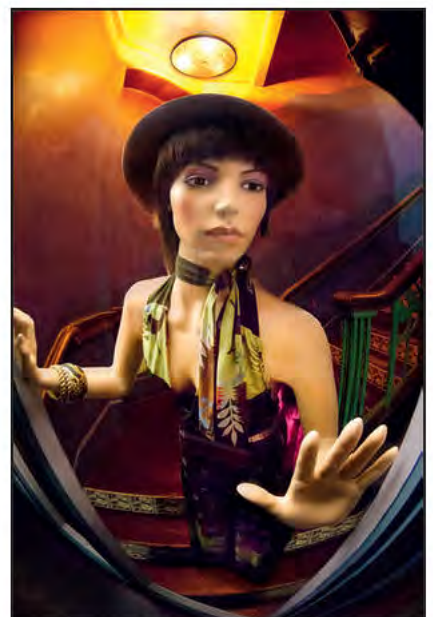
No Escape - Original Image



No Escape - Stairs



No Escape - Ceiling Light Correct Exposure



No Escape - Final Image

DIGITAL BEGINNINGS



Adrian Davies remembers the origins of the Royal Photographic Society Digital Imaging Group and gives us some insight into why it was formed and what its purpose was. He also reflects on the difficulties of digital imaging in the early years.

Around a year ago I left my full time post at NESCOL College in Surrey, to concentrate on my other career as a freelance wildlife and natural history photographer and author. During my time at NESCOL I set up and ran several unique and innovative courses in Electronic (Digital) Imaging, as well as working with organisations like the RPS to set up their Digital Imaging Group (DIG).

I do not have the date to hand (perhaps a reader can help?) but I do remember one Saturday afternoon travelling to the Sorptomist Club in London, with around 12 other RPS members to discuss whether there was a need for a new RPS Group in Digital Imaging. Amongst the participants were John Henshall and the late Barrie Thomas. A lively discussion ensued when it was decided that there was indeed a need for such a group, though only perhaps for a couple of years. The main aim of the group was seen to educate the other groups into the new technology of DI, and that its job would be done after that! No one quite foresaw the creative possibilities of the new technology, which we see in places like DIG today, and make it the fastest growing group in the RPS.

My own courses at NESCOL started in 1991 with an HNC in Electronic Imaging funded by a government scheme aimed at re-training unemployed photographers and graphic designers in the new technology. With one 640 x 480 camera (costing around £2.5K), a monochrome 300dpi scanner, and 5 Apple Macs we ran the first course. There were no textbooks, and no Internet, so finding information was always a struggle for both staff and students. Despite all this, the course was very successful, and ex students found jobs at Kodak, Nikon, and various hospitals and museums, often as scanner operatives. Many are still working in the industry today.

NESCOL was the first college in the UK, and probably in the world outside of the US, to run full time courses in digital photography, and manufacturers were often knocking

on the door with offers of new kit to try out or visits by their staff. Within a couple of years we were trialling the new Kodak D100 camera, Photo CD, and Kodak Dye Sublimation printers, all hugely expensive pieces of kit!

IT was always a challenge, particularly in a PC based college. Our oasis of Apple Macs was always seen as a nuisance by the rest of the college, though I suspect much of this was based on jealousy! I still have nightmares about our struggles with SCSI chains, Syquest discs and RAM costs. I also still vividly remember the first time we transferred an image, on 3.5" floppy disc, from a Mac onto a PC and viewed it on a PC screen in an early version Photoshop. The college was hooked, and everyone wanted Photoshop on their PCs.

I am forever staggered at the quality of images from the early cameras, even from the early 1990's. I still have images from the DCS 100 of flowers that I shot which easily print to A4. I have recently re-processed some of those early images in modern software (Adobe Camera Raw) and am still pulling out detail that was not present in the early prints. Kodak in particular also encouraged us to test the cameras for other techniques – infra red and ultraviolet imaging, and high speed.

If ever there was a technology ahead of its time it was Photo CD. For 60p per image you got 5 different resolutions of scan from a 35mm negative up to 18Mb (the Pro Version also gave a 72Mb file for a few pounds each from other sizes of original). Market uptake was low though, and with home scanners becoming common, the technology was abandoned.

The Dye sublimation print process was superb too, though expensive, using three whole sheets of coloured acetate the same size as the print. I still have some from the 1990's, and they are still as vibrant as ever. The technology was soon overtaken by ink jet, with the results we know and love today.



Fig 1



Fig 2

Software was always a bit of a struggle in the early days, particularly with Macs or PCs only having perhaps 4Mb RAM, and 40Mb hard discs! Originally there were two main imaging software titles, Adobe Photoshop, and Letraset Color Studio (which had a layers facility from day one). Both were expensive, and we needed to decide early on which one we were going to stay with. Fortunately we made the right choice with Photoshop because Color Studio eventually vanished.

The early 2000's saw a rapid rise in the number of cameras, a fall in prices, coupled with huge advances in IT (cheaper RAM and storage etc.)

In 1993 I was contacted by Margaret Riley from Focal Press to see if I might want to write a book for them on Electronic Imaging. As might be imagined, with no other material available (other than magazine articles, particularly by John Henshall) this was a rather daunting task but, with ex student and friend Phil Fennessy, we produced the book, published in 1994. It became highly successful and went on for 4 editions, and was translated into several European languages. For the first edition we wanted to include some innovative technology – a CD ROM containing images from a variety of cameras. We produced this ourselves, but soon fell foul of compatibility issues, with some readers with older PCs complaining that they could not open the images. A second disc was produced and sent out, but it was a rather salutary lesson!

Fast-forward to today: with a plethora of high resolution, multi function cameras it is difficult to know where the technology will take us next. It is now possible to get cameras that do not require focussing, have in-built GPS, built in ability to produce HDR and panoramic images, broadcast quality video, and send images to the internet. We live in a very different world than that of fifteen years ago, with social media providing a platform for all manner of types and levels of photo imaging. A very sobering statistic that I found recently (though not sure of its accuracy) is that more photographs have been taken in the last 5 years than in the rest of photographic history! I've had an exciting time, and will surely continue to do so!

Adrian has a large collection of digital cameras and other paraphernalia, which he has started to show to camera clubs. Please contact him by the email below if you would like to discuss a visit:
adaviesimaging@gmail.com
www.adriandaviesimaging.com



Fig 3



Fig 4



Fig 5



Fig 6



Fig 7

Captions:

Fig 1. Passion Flower (*Passiflora x rosea*). The detail in the flower is superb. Kodak DCS 620

Fig 2. Calla Lily (*Zantedeschia aethiopica*) photographed with the Kodak DCS 620 DSLR in 1998. The subtlety in the foliage is remarkable.

Fig 3. Adrian Davies with the mighty Kodak DCS 100 camera. There was no room in the box for a lens.

Fig 4. A Photo CD dating back to 1992 – truly a technology ahead of it's time.

Fig 5. Balloon at the point of bursting. Flash

duration approx. 1/10,000 second, open flash technique. Shock waves made visible by use of small amount of talcum powder inside balloon. Kodak DCS 620

Fig 6. Jade Vine (*Strongylodon macrobotrys*) the remarkable, unique colour of this plant, photographed at the RHS Garden at Wisley, has been faithfully reproduced by the DCS 620.

Fig 7. Infra-red shot of grandstand at Epsom Downs. Unmodified Nikon Coolpix camera. c.1997

MY PHOTOGRAPHY



Sheila Haycox enjoys attending photographic workshops that involve a few other like-minded people, getting inspiration and guidance that she can put into practice when going out on her own or with friends. She has a wide range of photographic interests including landscapes, natural history and street photography.



Yorkshire Dawn

How My Photography Has Developed:

Room for improvement: "yes, always". I am never satisfied; I think I have the perfect shot, process it, look at it, change my mind, think again, then think, "so what, just another image". I have produced a few decent images and I think the reason for getting some good results was photographic workshops combined with looking at images that have done well in salons and exhibitions: a good source of inspiration.

Photographic Workshops:

I have, over the years been on a fair number. My first one ever was in the late nineties as a newbie to photography; I remember it so well. My husband thought it would be a good idea, so I took my car and drove all the way to Northumberland from Devon. No Sat Nav in those days. I had yellow post-its stuck all over the dashboard as indications of my route. There were 10 of us, we stayed in self-catering cottages and the two leaders took us to the 'right places'. It was a lot of fun but

not a holiday. It was very tiring with long days as we traipsed around all the places that to me were fantastic and so completely different to anything I had taken. But it was also a great learning experience in the use of tripods, getting to know the camera and of course the most important part of photography: lighting. With so much expert advice I was on a high. I was using a film camera then but the techniques are still the same. My eyes were opened and there was no holding back. My biggest problem was



Three in a Row



Pelican Reflection



Melee

the drive home; I was so tired from a tough week that I had to keep stopping for a quick nap.

I now go on workshops that in the main only have three photographers; this gives us more opportunities to go to places where it's difficult to set up tripods in tight

situations. Also we each get that little more attention from our 'expert'. In the main I have opted for landscape workshops but have been on Birds of Prey, Irish Seabirds, Seals and Dalmatian Pelicans – my latest and certainly the best, as my skills have improved and I managed to get so many good images.

I have been fortunate in getting the right person running a workshop. What I find so good is that he knows exactly where to go whatever the weather; if there is a sudden change of light then we drive off into a different direction. I get plenty of advice which has been put into practise when I have gone out with friends on other trips.



Tulio and Jon



Tulio Rearing



Trotting Through the Bluebells

My Own Style: I do have the opportunity of 'doing my own thing' in the hope of getting something different, which I certainly did recently. I was out taking bluebells and this white horse and bareback rider appeared. How lucky is that!!!!

I still do workshops, as it's a very good way to be with other people of like mind and very often I meet up with some of them again on other workshops. It's certainly the ideal for those who live on their own but want good photographic company.

Inspiration: Yes, I am inspired to do something different. I get ideas from talks given by renowned photographers, studying successful images in salons and exhibitions, going out of my comfort zone and trying other genres. I have started doing more creative work and lately have been inspired by Steve Le Provost who I greatly admire; but I do intend developing a style of my own.

Projects: I now do more projects, which came from doing Holsworthy Livestock

Market. I photographed the auction and auctioneer, farmers, livestock and buildings. I was given free range of the market, so a varied selection came from this, which gave me the idea of using them for an ARPS panel and I was highly delighted to gain my ARPS distinction from this project.

What next? I am still striving for that "wow" image but all that really matters is: do I like what I am doing and I can honestly say, "yes". It doesn't matter what everyone else thinks as long as you enjoy what you are doing.



ARPS Panel



Bareback Rider Impression



Ozzie's Patch

ALLOWING PERCEPTION TO MATURE



Andy Beel FRPS is an entertaining speaker on the circuit and he gives us a few insights into the picture editing process by allowing pictures to mature before post-processing and not deleting files at the earliest stage. He then moves on to combining awareness and perception with a post-processing plan to achieve a picture with a dominant element that speaks to the viewer at an emotional level.



Evening Landsvirkjun Bjarnarflag Iceland May 2011 – digital Lith interpretation

Yesterday evening I was giving a talk and was asked about the picture editing process. As photographers we like to look at our captured pictures as soon as we get home from a shoot, which only goes to show our enthusiasm for our art and craft.

We can be easily lulled into a false sense of insecurity by selecting those pictures with immediate impact and processing them for sharing with others, or printing or whatever

we do with our particular pictures, whether we are a professional or amateur. The professional will have an urgent need to put the proofs in front of the client as quickly as possible.

The amateur however doesn't have that time constraint and pressure; it can be a very good thing to allow a period of grace between taking the pictures and then editing for post-processing. That period

of grace is a time of maturation when the pictures that we have taken mature on our hard drives. The files do not actually change but our perception of them does.

When we leave our pictures for a while, we lose the immediate effect of what we think we've done, the excitement and emotion, which we had at the picture taking stage. We forget about the other sensory inputs that we've had as we pressed the shutter



Original RAW file before processing

release such as how the wind blew, the fragrance of flowers that were there, what we heard – birdsong etc etc.

All other sensory input apart from the visual fades in this period of grace. What is left in the end is the file – the actual values of brightness in front of the camera lens because that's all that the camera can record – brightness. It doesn't have any emotional sense such as memory or a pool of photographic templates to which it has to conform. Cameras have no emotional intelligence, memory, perception or awareness – that's your job as the photographer.

This period of grace leaves us in the end with the cold facts of what we actually did without the romanticism or what we thought we did at the taking stage. It allows us to see things as they really are, for good or ill. Occasionally, after a shoot, when I look at the pictures I will be disappointed with what I've done. Then perhaps I will look at them again after a while, months or maybe years later, and then I can truly see them for what they are – good or bad and in some very rare cases masterpieces appear, but in most other cases they don't.

So it's probably wise not to delete files straight away off of your hard drive but allow them to mature for months or years and then come back to them later with a clear head and insightful vision that isn't marred by the excitement and preconceptions of the day.

The shot on the left-hand page opposite RPS DIGIT Magazine 2014 Issue 3

was taken at Bjarnarflag, Iceland May 2011. It's been sitting and maturing on my external hard drive for over two years unnoticed and unloved.

Above on this page is the RAW colour original without any post-processing, the place where I started in Lightroom.

Lots of photographers like to see the before and the after pictures and so this is an example. It just gives you the bare facts of where I started in Lightroom so my files are no different to yours in that respect - dull and flat. Low contrast files at the taking stage is a good point to start. Beginners tend to think that you need a bright sunny day to take pictures. Experience tells me that I want a low contrast file that I can interpret in my own style and add contrast in the post-processing.

Unprocessed RAW files are fairly unimpressive beasts, however they have huge potential for being processed in any way you can imagine.

Awareness and perception are key factors here, long before the mechanics of pressing buttons on a computer keyboard is involved. If you cannot see a potential final image or recognize a problem, how will you be able to create it or fix it?

Who or what do you aspire to? Who are the photographers that create the pictures that give you pleasure and satisfaction? A challenge for you – make a list of all the photographers, dead or alive, working in any medium that inspires you. Now, think

about what it is in these people's work that attracts you and why. How are you going to enhance your visual perception from the insights these people are showing you?

Who was it who said "computers are useless, they only give you the answers" (not asking the perceptive questions): – Pablo Picasso.

A free top tip – make a Post-Processing Plan for the picture you want to enhance BEFORE you move ANY sliders in the editing software. In your post-processing, plan in your head the answers to the following questions:

- 1 – What do I want to say about the subject to the viewer, what is the attraction, why might they be interested, do you have anything new or different to say?
- 2 – What is the subject of the picture and how are you going to give the subject matter dominance in the picture space in the post processing?
- 3 – How are you going to create a tonally balanced picture?
- 4 – What needs to be cropped out, lightened or darkened, have an increase in contrast etc?

In this wide ranging article we have looked at not deleting files before they mature, RAW files have the potential to be processed in any way you can imagine, where does your inspiration come from and how are you going to use that stimulus to affect your own interpretation of a picture.

Go online now to see more of Andy's work at www.andybeelfrps.co.uk

PHOTOGRAPHS TO COMPUTER ART VIA TRANSFORM SPACE AND DIGITAL FILTERS



David Brownrigg's interest in photography extends back well over fifty years, and he has belonged to photographic societies as far apart as Edinburgh and Jamaica. His interest in using computers for image making and art began with computer graphics over forty years ago and developed with image processing in the early 1980s, including use of non-linear filters for brush and texturing effects. The current work stems from long-standing interests in computational physics where convolution processes, that are used in solving gravitational field equations and structure analysis, require use of fast Fourier transforms and processing in that space. Background reading for his article is listed in a short bibliography.

I first realised how great the potential was, for combining novel computing methods and photography, in the early 1980s when working on astronomical image processing. I had access to a raster colour device with sufficient resolution and colour range for visually acceptable display of more general images. Also, my computational astronomy background gave me an appreciation of how simple changes in the discrete Fourier, or other, transform of a digitised image could give interesting effects in the image itself – changing one value in the transform results in changes to each and every pixel of the final image.

For example, **Figure 1** is a simple scene, while **Figure 2** shows the result of some transforms that affect the image extensively. Details of this process are given later as part of a progression through simple changes that allow parts of the original image to be recognised, to increasing levels of processing that give a range of abstract effects.

Recently I have been experimenting with several approaches to transform space changes. These include (a) basic manipulation of the transform space modes for a single image, (b) combining the transform space modes for a pair of images, (c) working with stacks of images or movie frames, both as sets of two-dimensional transforms and a three-



Figure 1

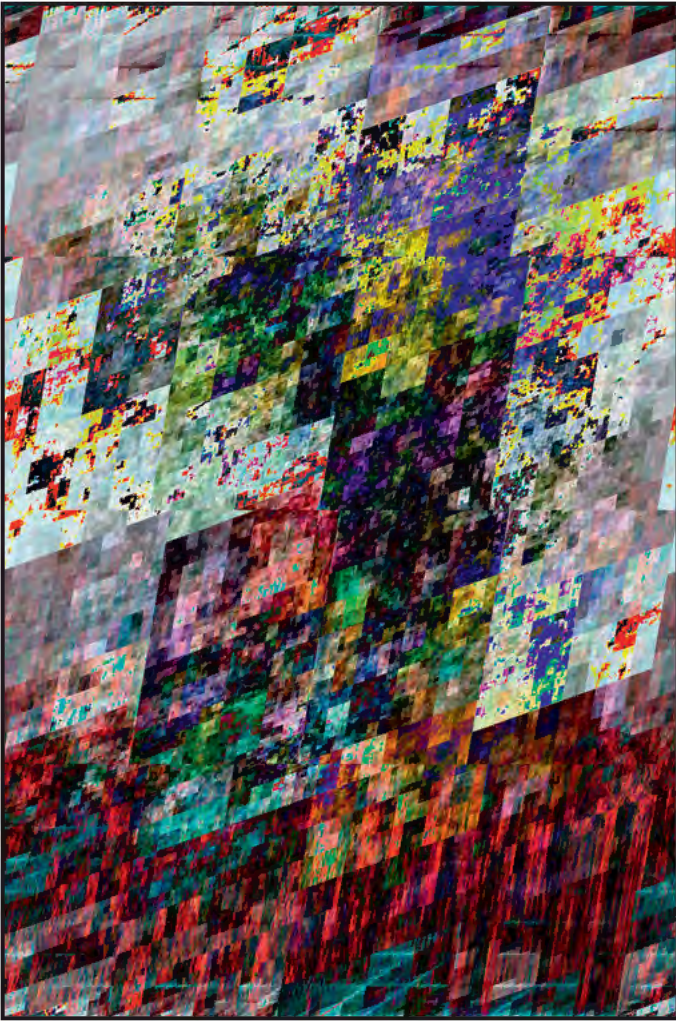


Figure 2



Figure 3

dimensional transform of the image stack, and (d) combining transforms to give a wide range of effects. I use Processing, a language built on Java, to program both standard transform algorithms and novel facilities, to give me full control over effects.

While some mathematics underlies these transforms, the essential features can be appreciated more generally. Typically, each pixel in a digital image is represented by three values, such as RGB or HSV, so an image can be processed in three separate parts, row by row and column by column, each a sequence of numerical values. For comparison, a digitised sound sample also gives a sequence of numerical values. This sequence can be considered to be made up of a combination of frequencies, each

having a specific wavelength and amplitude. A given wavelength/frequency of the sound corresponds to its musical pitch and the amplitude is a measure of its loudness.

In the same way, any of the three components of a line of pixels, horizontally or vertically, in a digital image can be interpreted as made up of a combination of waves each with an amplitude related to its brightness. Different transforms work with waves of different shapes, and interpreting one transform in terms of another leads to pictorial effects unobtainable with any practicable method of processing images directly. The transforms used are Fourier, Walsh, Slant, Sine and Cosine. A brief commentary on the relationship between the transforms is in the Appendix.

Using different forward and reverse transforms gives a complex effect that depends on both the image and the transforms. A small number of examples can illustrate this, but can only hint at the range of application.

Figure 3 is an example where the underlying image is still largely recognisable, while the effects go beyond simple blurring, to include elements of the image replicated at lower intensity elsewhere. The 'modes' representing the largest scale features of the image have been kept unchanged, while the shorter scale information has been encoded by the Cosine transform and used by the inverse Slant transform to contribute to the final image.



Figure 4

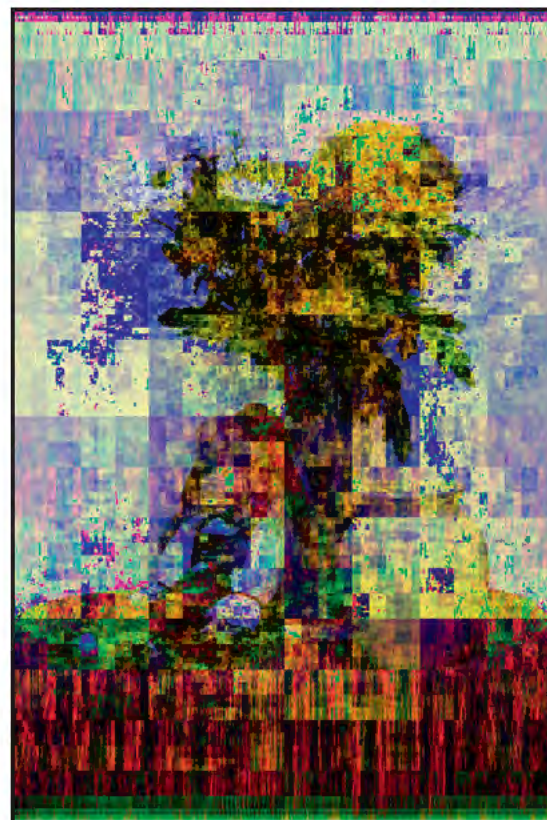


Figure 5

Figure 4 shows the use of a different transform combination (Slant and Walsh, used forward and inverse respectively). There is now a complex pattern of horizontal and vertical divisions, giving an image that is quite far from the original while keeping some recognisable aspects. These divisions, characteristic of inverse Slant and Walsh transforms, can in turn be modified if the final image has shear distortion applied horizontally and vertically, with either a wave (sine-like) or saw ripple variation in both directions as well. This, of course, would lead to geometric distortion of the global spatial relationships in the result, but this can be countered by also applying the inverse (reverse) shear and ripple to the images before the initial transform. Mixing the transforms, even on a single image, can lead to much larger changes. **Figure 2** is an example of this, where a forward Cosine, and inverse Walsh transform were applied to **Figure 1**, with a shear and saw change before transform, and its reverse after the inverse transform.

As the different image components are processed separately, they can be treated differently. In **Figure 5** the blue component has been left unchanged while the red and green have a forward Fourier and inverse Walsh applied. In this case significant colour separation results, as well as the

spatial divisions and repositioning of image elements seen before. The colour changes are increased by rescaling to the display range separately for each colour component.

As a last illustration of the various transforms, Sine provides some significant effects. **Figure 6** results from using the Sine transform and Slant inverse applied to **Figure 1**. Unmodified, the Sine transform 'burns out' image edges, with values beyond display limits. Instead of capping, as in the previous figure the values range is rescaled to the display range, separately for red, green and blue components, giving some striation effects near the edges of the image and a high degree of abstraction, especially when combined with shear and sine-wave modification that rearranges the horizontal and vertical divisions from the transforms.

Some of the images are both abstract and decorative, but represent only a small part of what can be achieved. Not least, the effects of any transform combination depend heavily on the source images. Here only a single starting picture has been used. Results with pairs of images or stacks of movie frames enable even more diverse effects. In practice the possibilities are limitless.

Appendix

Any sequence of pixel values can be interpreted as the sum of a set of waves or modes, of different length, each mode having a particular amplitude value. The set of mode values exactly describes the line of pixels, and the original pixel values can be reconstructed from the mode values by taking the inverse transform.

As shown in **Figure 7**, the discrete Fourier transform decomposes a sequence of values into the amplitudes of a set of sine and cosine waves, the Walsh transform does the decomposition in terms of a set of square waves, and the Slant transform in terms of 'saw-tooth' shaped waves. The Cosine transform interprets the data values as though they have a mirror reflection in the right boundary, while the Sine transform interprets the data as if it were reflected and negated in the right boundary. This means that cosine and sine waves that repeat over twice the data length are the basic frequencies for the Cosine and Sine transforms respectively. Pixel values forming a basic curve for one transform will be transformed to a single mode of that transform.

Figure 7 graphs the first few modes for each of the transforms. Each basic wave, or mode,



Figure 6

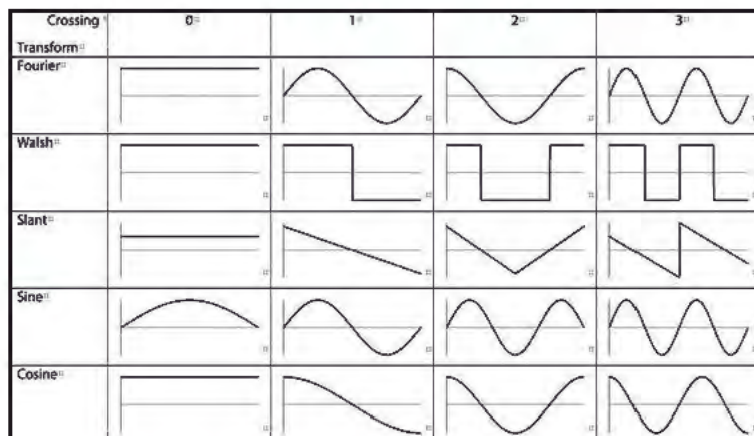


Figure 7 - Transform basis functions by crossing number

NB All scaled zero crossing basis functions have a maximum amplitude of unity, and with that scaling all the basis functions have a maximum amplitude range of [-1,1] excepting Slant, where some absolute values exceed unity. Thus the slant transform graphs have been differently scaled, to an amplitude range of [-2,2].

changes sign (+ to -, or - to +) a different number of times, so the basic waves can be ordered by this 'crossing number'. When using different forward and inverse transforms I relate different transforms to each other by associating their basic modes with the same crossing number.

Figure 7 also shows how the different transforms are related in terms of their action. If a single mode is used in the inverse for any transform, what emerges is the corresponding basic curve for that transform. For example, if a simple image is white on the left half and black on the right, there is a brightness step change half way across. If the values are input to the Walsh transform, it recognises that step change as fitting its basic mode for crossing-number 1, and represents the pixels by that mode with a value defining the step size. If the mode data are used by the inverse Fourier transform, then the final result is a sine wave change in brightness, as that is the corresponding curve for the same crossing number. For any starting set of pixels we generally end up with very different pixels values - a major transformation where each starting pixel contributes to every final pixel.

In two dimensions, we can transform each row of pixels in an image, and then transform each column of the result to

obtain the two-dimensional discrete transform (and in depth through a stack of images for the three-dimensional transform). It is this set of values we can manipulate, or combine with transforms of other images, before taking the inverse transform to obtain novel images.

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DIGIT CHALLENGE: HEADS IN THE CLOUDS



Head in the Clouds



Original Image

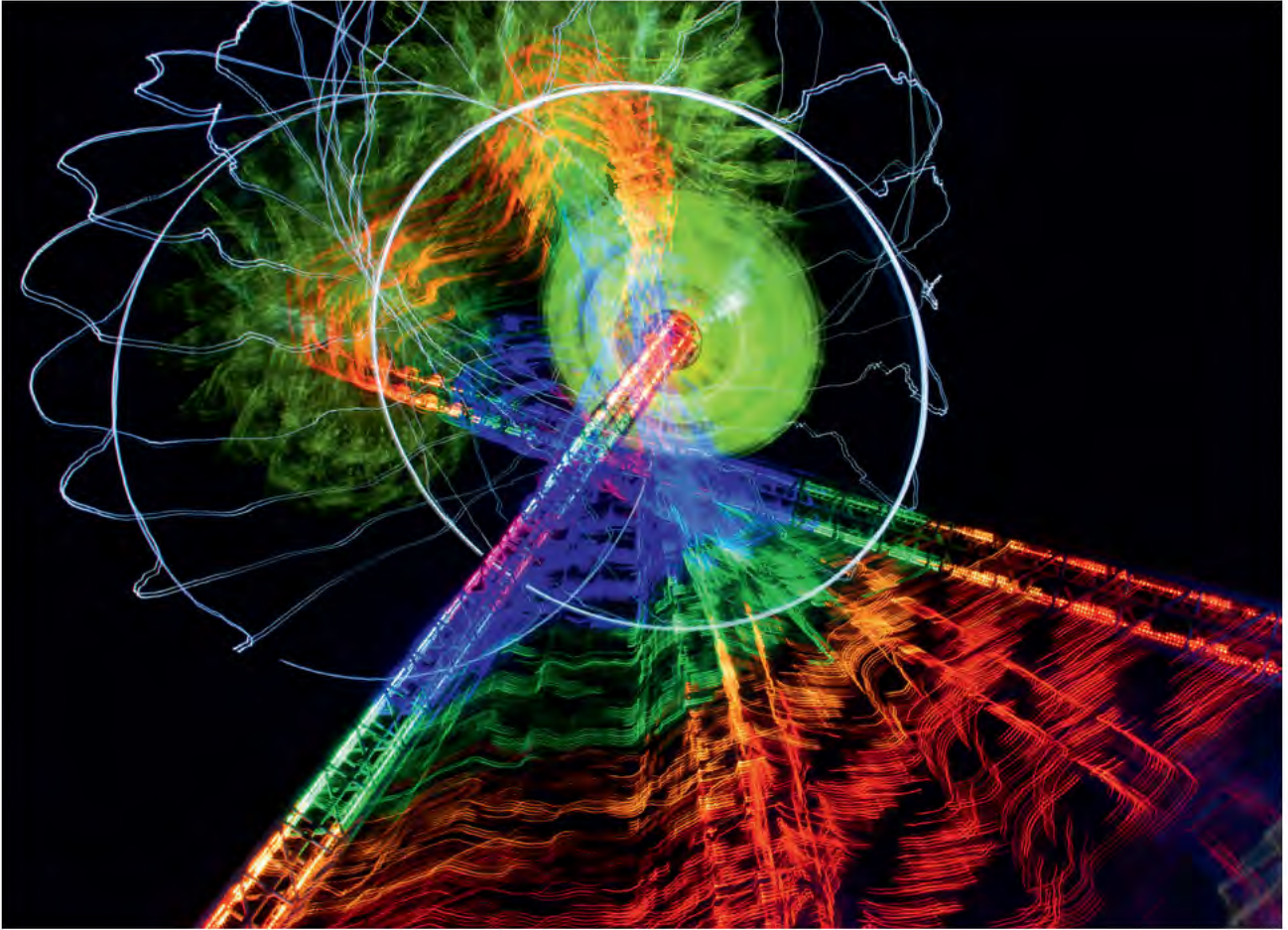
Heads in the Clouds is one of a number of creative/alterd reality images that I have produced over the past couple of seasons. The original image was taken in Barcelona with a Fuji bridge camera, one of a number of images taken that day of various street artists. It did take me a considerable time before I actually decided what to do with the image.

I did not keep the PSD file therefore cannot show the process carried out, however the stages were quite straightforward. The original shot was of head and shoulders only. Having decided on a square format, I created a new canvas of the required size and then added layers of clouds together with a little noise.

The main image of the street artist was then cut and pasted to the cloud layer three times. The unwanted parts of the three heads were then carefully rubbed out and the scale of each head altered to create a diagonal. The whole process took about an hour.

At club level the image did OK in competitions but at national and international level has won a number of awards including a Silver Medal at the GDPU (Glasgow District Photographic Union) National Digital Exhibition 2014 and a Gold Medal at the Cork International Salon of Photography 2014 in the creative class.

DIGIT CHALLENGE: SPIROGRAPH #1



Spirograph #1

The image you are looking at above, is of a fairground ride, a tower-like structure, and the resulting image has been achieved in camera – yes, that’s right, all in camera. I went out to the Winter Wonderland and took some images and messed about “as you do”. Another example is shown on the right.

I was using a Manfrotto tripod and a Pistol grip of the same make. I had been monitoring the ride for a short time and decided to place myself below the tower on the concourse and looked up at it. Then I gauged that, when the ride had reached its peak, I should try to time the decent down. The angle I positioned the tower in the viewfinder was in the left corner going at an angle to the right! The exposure was 16 seconds at F22; I pressed the shutter at a time when I thought the ride was going to descend down, allowing this to happen.

I then used the pistol grip and swung it

around on the ball joint all the way to the right, to try and mirror the starting position!

(Note: I wasn’t able to tell how far I had moved across or what the result would be – I clicked off the B shutter and low and behold, this is what I captured, once it had saved itself to the SD card.) There was some glare at the bottom of the frame, which I cropped out, a slight tweak to the saturations and levels but a small amount. The crossing towers was the cool result and the white swirling lines were the individual lights on each car revolving around the tower and at the same time lowering downwards.

I think it’s quite a unique trick and produced a rather creative ‘different’ effect of fairground rides.

I doubt it can work on all of them, but worth the risk factor and time in trying – all good fun.



Tower Twister #1

SOME VERY BASIC TIPS FOR DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHERS

You probably know all of these, but do you actually put them into practise?

It might seem obvious but - get it right in the camera

It's much better to get it right in the camera than to assume you can put it right on the computer. Trying to correct errors can mean a long time in front of a computer screen. If your image is not sharp when you take it, it will never be sharp.

However, if shooting RAW, overexpose rather than underexpose, especially for dark subjects and shadow detail, because you will have less noise.

Have a backup strategy

If (like me) you have ever had a computer crash before you backed your work, you will already back it up regularly.

External hard disks are relatively inexpensive to use for backing up. You can do this manually or buy software to do this for you. It is a good idea to back up to at least 2 different places in case of disk failure/corruption.

Tip for viewing an image destined for projection

Most competition software projects the image on a black background. To preview it, with the image open in Photoshop, press the F key and 'toggle' until the image appears against a black background; the result is sometimes surprising.

Printing tip

If you don't know which side of the paper is the correct side for printing, slightly moisten the tips of the thumb and forefinger of one hand. Gently squeeze only the very corner of the paper and release your grip.

The paper will stick to your finger or thumb on the side which will be printed. Put the paper into your printer with this side showing – printing side up.

Learn some keyboard shortcuts

They might seem difficult at first but they will save you a great deal of time in the long run. If you go to the drop-down menus at the top of the screen in Photoshop you can find out what they are. Some of them are the same as in other programs such as Word or Excel.

For example:

File>Save is Cmd S (Ctrl S on a PC)

Use this regularly to avoid losing any changes to your image. But avoid 'saving' a jpeg file; always use 'save as' a psd or tif file.

Crop progressively and review in the History Palette

The way that I decide how much to crop is to crop progressively in Photoshop and then click backwards and forwards in the history palette to compare the different crops one after the other. Sometimes it helps to view the image at less than full screen to get the overall compositional effect.

Let me know whether any of my tips have helped.
If you have a tip that you think might be useful,
send me an email: digiteditor@rps.org

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A searchable, cumulative contents list of previous issues 41-59 is available from the DIGIT Group Magazine page of the Group's website at:

www.rps.org/special-interest-groups/digital-imaging/about/030-digit-group-magazine

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