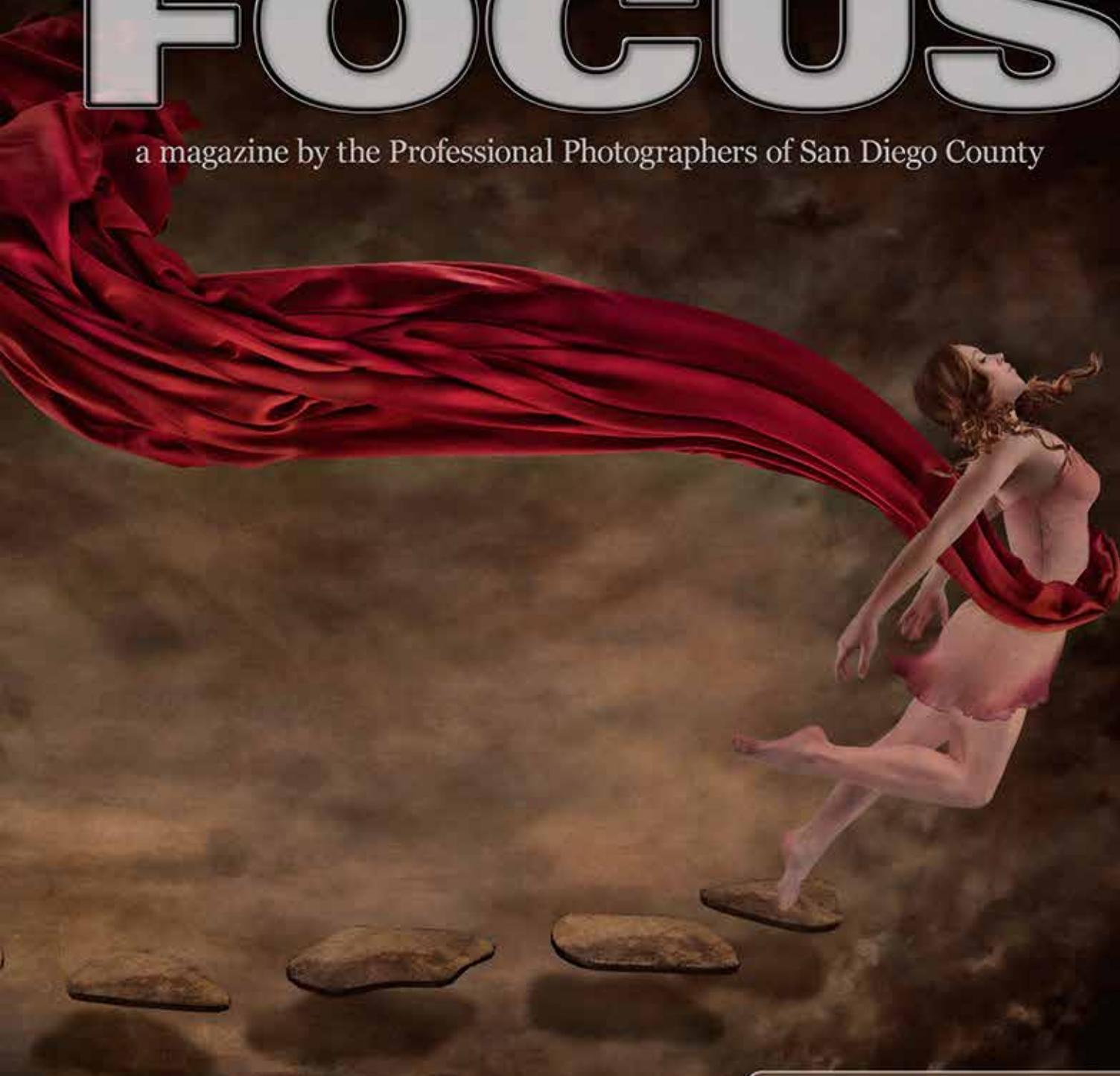


December 2014

FOCUS

a magazine by the Professional Photographers of San Diego County



Barely Holding On
by Alexandra Semel

PPSDC
Professional Photographers of San Diego County

www.ppsdc.com

Code of Ethics

- 1 Observe the highest standard of honesty in all my transactions, avoiding the use of false, confusing, inaccurate and misleading terms, descriptions and claims.
- 2 At all times endeavor to produce photographs of a quality equal or superior to the samples I display; to apply my best efforts towards providing the best possible photographic services and to play my part in raising the general standard of photographic craftsmanship.
- 3 Show a friendly spirit of cooperation to my fellow professional photographers and assist them whenever possible should they be in trouble or difficulty.
- 4 At all times avoid the use of unfair competitive practices and hereby subscribe to the Federal Trade Commission Rules of Fair Competitive Practices for the professional photographic industry.
- 5 Assist my fellow professional photographers and share my knowledge with them and encourage them individually and collectively to achieve and maintain the highest standards of quality.
- 6 Recognize the authority of the Association in all matters relating to the interpretation of this code.

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Gleanings From the Past Nine Years

When I started my photography business in 2005 I had no idea that I would learn some valuable life lessons but I guess if you are open to it something can be learned from nearly anything. Here is a short list of what I have learned in the past nine years:

1. Do Your Best to Remove Ego

I know it seems counter to a successful business but finding another motivating force besides ego can be a great thing. There is nothing wrong with being the best and to some degree marketing is an important component to what we do but making decisions based on ego are not productive. Thoughts like "I am too experienced to learn from..." or "That client can't afford me" are limiting perceptions. You must be open to things in order to grow. So challenging yourself to be better for artistic or technical growth still yields improvement without the pitfalls of ego.



Time is fleeting and if you are not fully invested in this moment, the moment is lost. Be present in everything you do...

constantly having regret, you are living in the past. Dwelling on the shot you just missed or the sale you didn't make distracts you from the task at hand and will likely lead to more regret. Feeling anxious means you are living in the future. The future will be here before you know it, so dwelling on the future prevents you from seeing what is happening right now. Plan for the future the best you can, then stop worrying about it. Will it rain for next Saturday's wedding? Maybe it will, maybe it won't... but worrying about it won't change the chance of precipitation. We work in a field of hundredths of a second. Time is fleeting and if you are not fully invested in this moment, the moment is lost. Be present in everything you do, when you are with your family and friends, don't be thinking about work, and when you are behind the camera, the only thing that exists is the light collected in that lens. Be engaged with your client and save the moments for them. The simple act of you clicking the shutter button immediately elevates the moment to be more important than other moments, so be thoughtful and consider the timing of the story you are telling.

3. Remove Expectations

Expectations are pre-negotiated contracts for disappointment. That being said, you should have a plan, a wedding time-line, for example, is a great thing. When everything goes as planned it makes for an easy day, but often things don't go as planned and you have to be able to adapt. If you can't get over the fact that the bride is late you will never be able to recover and make good images for the rest of the day. Constantly thinking, "Well if you weren't an hour late, we would have been able to..." Expecting clients to be on time, follow instructions, choose the image you like, will only lead to frustration. Do your best to guide your clients, but you have to be OK when things don't go as planned. So long as they are happy, you should be happy....

Continued on page 10

I am eager to hear from every member if you have thoughts on the group, its direction, and things you would like to see as a member or vendor. Please feel free to email me at president@ppsdcc.com

Sean Capshaw
President PPSDC 2014/15



BEST-IN-SHOW

November's Best In Show - Digital Imaging

Barley Holding On

- Alex Semel

I love to tell stories. For a while, I photographed what I saw around me with a photojournalistic/documentary type of approach. From that style of photography I found myself wanting to tell elaborate stories and now my work reflects that approach, by always beginning with a concept, often that concept being a soulful story. When I began to learn Photoshop, I realized that I now had the tools to take my photography to a different place. I saw a way to translate what I visualized into the image you now see, so as to reflect my story.

This image is part of a portfolio that was born out of a conversation with a friend after she found herself lost in life, thinking that there was nothing to keep her going. When she revealed that she had attempted suicide, I found myself searching for a way to find something worthy of life in order to bring her to the point where she could find

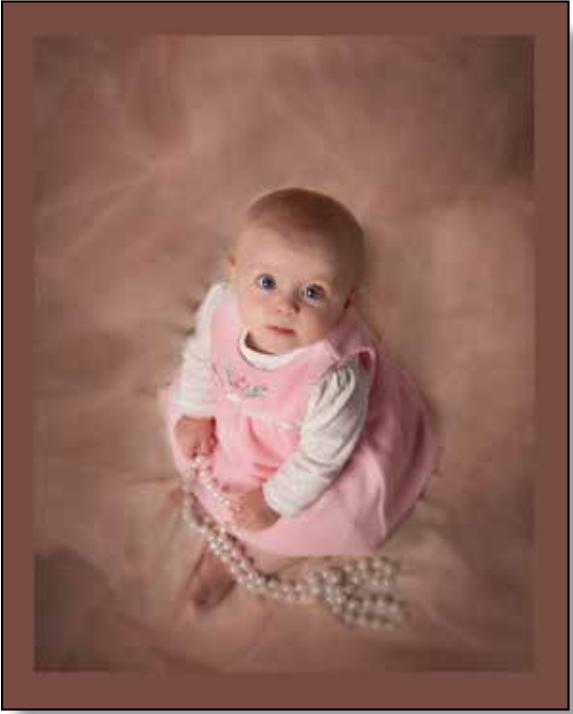
“When nothing else means much any more. Lost in despair. Ready to take the fall to the unknown.”

- Alex Semel

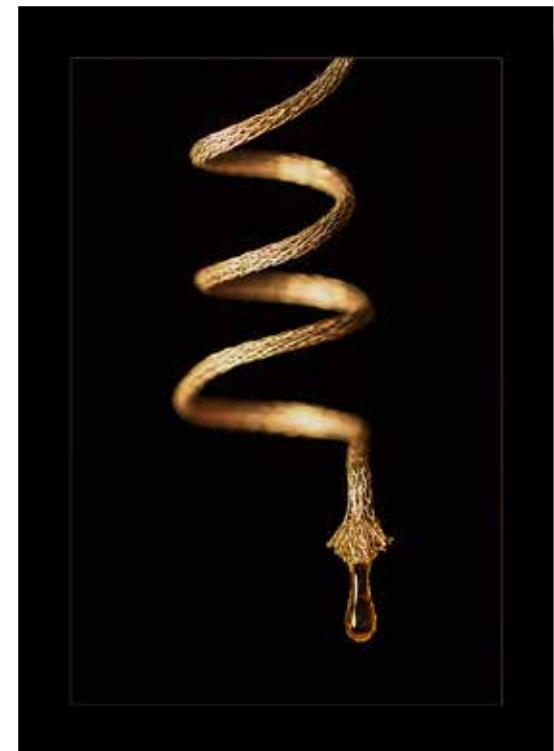
some redeeming aspects within everyday situations to give her a more positive frame of mind, and to help her see that life is worth living. I wanted her to see that sometimes it's okay to look the other way and to walk away from the painful path she was on rather than focusing on that pain. My intention was to find a permanent source of hope, not only for her, but for others, including myself, when we encounter difficult times.

One interesting result of this project was finding more people in the same situation - at their breaking point, with the same suicidal thoughts; the same lack of forgiveness to self or others, which seemed to be the main underlying common denominator.

Continued on page 10

BEST-IN-CATEGORY**BEST-IN-CHILDREN**

Tell me Why - Lisa K Miller

**BEST-IN-NATURE**Sunset At Navajo Point Grand Canyon
- Fred Blood III**BEST-IN-ILLUSTRATIVE**

Down To The Wire - Monica Royal

**BEST-IN-PORTRAITS**

The Scarlet Stare - Christi Ransom

BEST-IN-CATEGORY**BEST-IN-SENIOR**

The Shoes Stay On - Christi Ransom

**BEST-IN-PHOTOJOURNALISM**

Houston We Have Lift Off - Fred Blood III



PHOTO SAFARI

By Launey LeSage

November's Safari took us inland to the beautiful San Diego Zoo's Safari Park. What a wonderful place to have a zoom lens and the opportunity to capture so many animals in a more natural environment. The baby lions are about eight months old now. Their family pride was fun



to see moving around their habitat. The little lions were running and jumping on each other, full of energy in the morning sun. The male lion was so impressive to see, and all the photographers present

were trying to get their best shot of him. The mother cheetah was also out in her area with her newer cubs, and we had a great view of them from the tram. Our PPSDC members attending

included Christi Ransom, Kip Cothran and Launey LeSage. We had a very nice morning visiting all the great attractions, but perhaps the most impressive was the massive Tiger River with three different viewing areas and a waterfall and walkways. I was amazed at the design elements and beauty of the structure, and I know that we all got some really great shots.



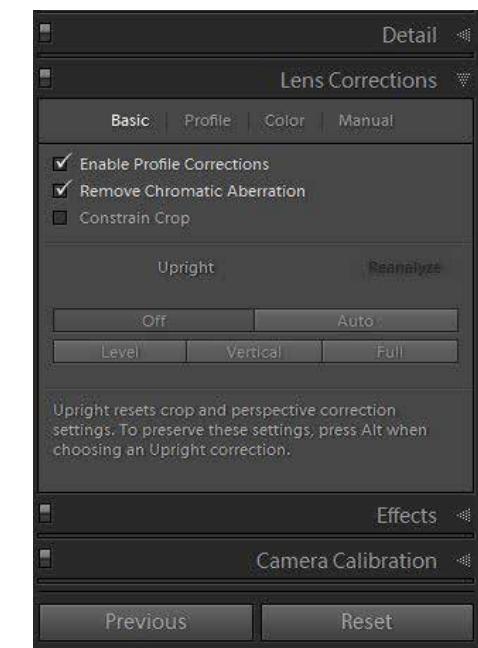
© Launey LeSage

**Lens Correction Panel in Lightroom**

By Ken Seals, Adobe Certified Expert Lightroom



In this article on Adobe Lightroom we will look at the Lens Correction panel in the develop module. You will find the lens correction panel on the right side of the develop module below the Detail panel and above the Effects panel. Here is a screen shot of the Lens Correction panel showing the Basic tab.



In the Basic tab you will see check boxes for Enable Profile Corrections, Remove Chromatic Aberrations and Constrain Crop. Checking the Enable Profile Correction box tells Lightroom to use a lens correction preset for that specific lens to correct primarily for vignetting and spherical distortion. (Adobe has furnished lens correction profiles for the most common lenses made by many manufacturers.) In the lower area of the Lens Correction panel you see the Upright function which provides several options for correcting rectilinear perspective. The Auto button corrects perspective in a compromising manner that does not give full correction in all axes but usually is very pleasing. Level will just level the image based on



rectilinear distortion of the camera looking up.



Continued on page 11

horizontal lines. The Vertical button will correct vertical lines in the photo to make them parallel with the frame. The Horizontal button does the same for horizontal lines. A few sample images follow showing these effects. As you will see, these corrections can result in drastic reshaping of an image which requires advance planning to leave plenty of area around your subject to prevent undesired cropping of the edges.

Here is an example showing before and after using the Enable Profile Corrections: Before Profile Correction – Notice that the image shows spherical distortion the verticals are not vertical and the horizon is not level.

The corrected image uses Enable Profile Correction and the Vertical button in Upright. Notice how the spherical distortion has been eliminated and the verticals are vertical within the frame.

In this case, the Vertical correction has resulted in leveling the horizon.

This image has a horizon that is not level and the building seems to be falling over backward due to the natural

ILLUSTRATIVE

MERIT AWARDS



Ride The Wave —
- Monica Royal



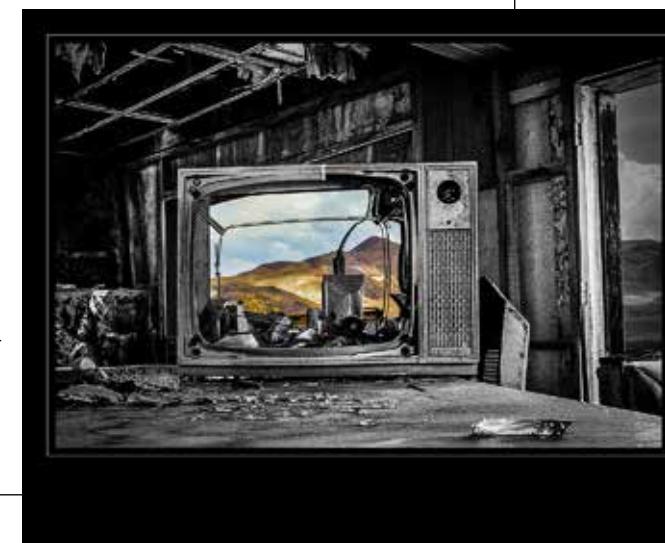
Make A Wish - Ken Hofheinz



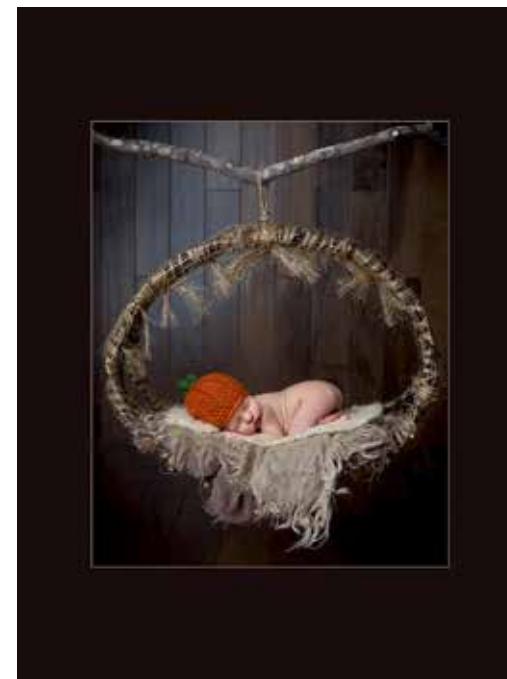
Pure Color
- Richard Benton —



— Trails of Glory - Launey LeSage



Technicolor Break Through - Fred Blood III —



CHILDREN

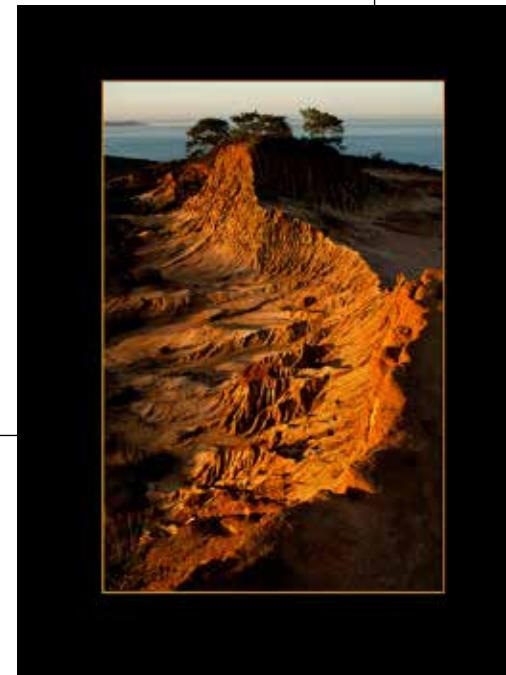
— Little Pumpkin - Gretchen Barros

DIGITAL



— He's Shy - Amelia Durham

NATURE



— Torrey Pines - Wally Nell

PORTAIT



Darfur Refugee - Wally Nell —



Barley Holding On

Continued from page 4

This project took me on a soul-searching journey to look for a silver lining in attempted suicide, to find out why we go there. This portfolio is about that search. And I'm still working on it, following the thought processes behind suicide; this is a work-in-progress.

Since this portfolio documents an emotional and spiritual journey, I felt I needed to incorporate a bit of poetry or phrases that would help illustrate the frame of mind behind each piece. For this particular image the thought behind it is the representation of that breaking point. It may be her last breath – that moment before she lets go and finds some rest in her soul.

Red represents life in the blood. The red fabric is the only thing still holding her together. For some, the red fabric is God, for others a kind word of hope from a friend, a goal, etc. I put broken borders around the image because the soul has no boundaries and is ethereal. *Barely Holding On* captures that second where we make an important decision whether to live, forgive or die.

This image is a composite. I photographed my model two times with different outfits and then put her together in Photoshop with different parts of images to give her the look I wanted. The same with the fabric. I shot multiple images in different positions and merged these images together to fit her body and composition. I used backdrops and textures in Photoshop, as well. I shot this project with NIKON equipment, using in-studio lighting.



PORTRAIT

MERIT AWARDS



Young Lady - Janet Bark —

My Hero - Sean Capshaw —

Lens Correction Panel in Lightroom

By Ken Seals, Adobe Certified Expert Lightroom

Continued from page 7

Now you can see the results of using the Lens Profile Correction and the Auto button in the Upright controls.



After Vertical correction, while the verticals have been corrected perfectly, the areas of white show how the correction compressed the lower portion of the image resulting from inadequate framing in the camera.

These fantastic Lens Correction tools in Lightroom are non-destructive and can be reversed in the history panel at any time, so play with them on your images to see how they can improve the final look.



The building is now level and the verticals are vertical, a very important requirement of architectural photography.

Our next examples will show the effect of not planning in advance for using these tools. In these photos, you will see an image before and after Vertical perspective correction. The after example shows the missing areas that would not have been an issue if the photo had been made with plenty of extra area around the subject in anticipation of using Vertical correction on the image. In this case, shoot loose.



Retouching with Frequency Separation

By Ken Hofheinz, Photoshop Guy



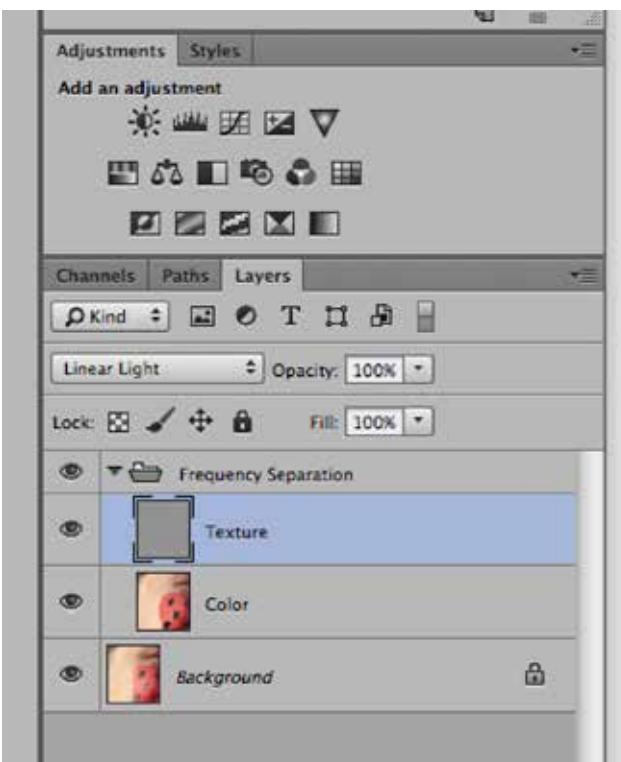
We have been promising some Photoshop tips, so here is our first one. This is a little advanced but I think everyone of you should be able to handle it. I have had a couple of you ask me about Frequency Separation. This technique is used primarily for retouching portraits, but you could use it for any number of things. The basic idea is to take the color and texture of an image and put them on their own layers, so that they can be dealt with separately. I have this set as an action on my computer. (Check the end of the article for a surprise)

So here are the basic steps for frequency separation. But first just so I don't loose anyone right at the start. These are the basic conversion between Mac and PC. I am a Mac guy from forever. So I speak mac, if you are a PC person I am sorry. But here are the equivalent keys if you are looking at your keyboard and trying to find the opt key.

So let's get started. Make two copies of your background. (CMD + J twice) Top layer name Texture, middle layer name Color. Of course you can name them whatever you like. This lets me know what's going on when I come back to an image 3 months later and try to remember what I did.

Turn off the visibility of the Texture layer by clicking the eyeball next to the layer name. Make the Color layer active. Now go to Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur (up in the menu). You want to set a blur just big enough to lose the fine detail. On a hi-res image that should be a radius around 4 pixels, no more than 10 pixels. This is subjective, in this example I used 4.2 pixels.

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In this screen shot the Texture layer is active.

Color layer with a Gaussian Blur of 4.2 pixels.



Before - a close-up of not so even face painting.



After - This was done very quickly. But you can see all the skin texture is retained.



Gleanings From the Past Nine Years

Continued from page 3

1. Do Your Best to Remove Ego

2. Live in the Moment

3. Remove Expectations

4. Serve Others

It seems like basic knowledge that in a service industry we should be comfortable serving others, but this is a larger statement. Are you making images that serve your clients? Do your images capture who they are? Do your images tell a story, entertain, bring a tear, capture a moment or save a memory? In the terms of business, think about your secondary clients, others who can benefit from your work. It seems odd to me that photographers are stingy with images that could be used in marketing for other business involved in events. In my mind, if a client has paid for my time, sharing images with a venue, caterer or florist is nothing but a win-win for both of you. One of my best referral sources is a wedding venue, why wouldn't I want them to show my images to prospective clients?



5. Simplify

This applies to many things from items offered in a package to what you pack in your camera bag. Evaluate things that are a value, keep those that have great utilization and remove those that never get used. Carrying around a lens that never gets taken out of your bag is a waste of resources. It was a waste to buy it and it is a waste to carry it every day. If you work alone don't have more gear than you can carry yourself. Using complicated lighting or large modifiers doesn't make any sense if you can't handle it with the staff on hand (and thinking you need it is either insecurity or ego).

6. Treat All Things with Kindness

This applies to all of nature. As photographers it is our job to find the beauty, interest, and contrast in what we see. All that surrounds us is important and part of the story. When you compose a photograph you are deciding what part of the story you want to tell, but it doesn't mean the next person wouldn't like to tell a different story so try to have as little negative impact as possible. Just because you consider yourself near the top of the food chain, it doesn't actually make you any more significant in the grand scheme.

7. Be Ethical

Longevity in business and clear conscience mandate ethical behavior. In this time of information and social media, a few bad reviews can destroy your business. So if not for altruistic reasons, be ethical for selfish reasons.

8. Be Right in Your Mind

Not in the context of winning an argument, but being right in your thoughts, speech and action. If you think mean or hateful things you will be tempted to speak mean or hateful things, and that leads to mean or hateful actions. Our thoughts are the seeds of the tree that is our deeds.

I hope you will be able to incorporate some of these things into your own business life and that they will make you a better photographer, business person, or simply a better human.

I am eager to hear from every member if you have thoughts on the group, its direction, and things you would like to see as a member or vendor.

Please feel free to email me at president@ppsdcc.com

Sean Capshaw
President PPSDC 2014/15

PPA Bronze Level Photographer of the year 2011, 2012
San Diego Wedding Photographer of the year 2009, 2010, 2011
San Diego Illustrative Photographer of the year 2010,
F-PPSDC, F-PPC

Digital Imaging File Preparation

By Ken Hofheinz

This will be painless, but one extra thing you have to do for this category. PPA is going to start requiring something like this for Digital Imaging entries. I say something like this because they have not told us exactly what they want yet. But it will be something like this.

File prep just as normal: Files MUST be in sRGB Color Space. Files shall be sized so that the longest dimension is 4000 pixels at 300dpi. It must be saved as JPG format and may not exceed 3.5MB in size. Naming must be as follows: category_titleofphoto_firstname_lastname.jpg

OK we got that. Now the extra - the judges would like to see the original images used to make the final image. In this example the final image has been sized to 4000 pixels wide. So the logical place to show thumbnails of the original captures is the bottom.

Save your finished file. Now Save As a different name and flatten it, then save again. We don't want to risk saving over all the original work you did.

The easiest way to add to the bottom is to go to the crop tool and making sure black is your background color, pull down on the bottom handle. This is subjective but I would not add more than 1/3 to your height. (Make sure your height is not over 4000 pixels) Commit to the crop. You should now have a black band on the bottom of your file.

Place each of the original images on their own layer, into this file. Make them roughly 370 pixels tall. (Set some guides and resize each image to fit height wise) I tried to line each one up with the corresponding image in the final. I put all the layers in a folder together and then turned the opacity of the folder down a little in an attempt to not distract from the main image.

If your image was vertical or portrait in orientation you would run your thumbnails down the side.



Light Room Short-Cuts

Some useful Cropping keyboard short cuts while in the Develop module.
I have these up on the side of my computer.

r = crop tool the rest of these are while you are in the crop tool

x = switches between landscape and portrait crop

hold down cmd/ctrl = straighten tool (my favorite of these)

o = rotates through Grid, Thirds, Diagonal, Triangle, Golden Ratio, Golden Spiral

Retouching with Frequency Separation

Continued on page 13

Now turn the Texture layer back on and make it active. Go to the menu and to Image > Apply Image. Set the layer drop-down menu to your Color layer. Change the Blending mode drop-down menu option to Subtract. Set the Scale to 2 and the Offset to 128. These will always be the numbers. Don't ask why, just except it. Now, click OK. Back in the layers panel, with the Texture layer active, change its blending mode to Linear Light. So now everything should look just like the background layer.

I suggest that you take these two new layers and put them in a folder together.

Now make the Color layer active and begin evening out any blotchy skin or in my case I actually painted in the face painting. This is the time consuming part. I did this example very fast and you can see a distinct line along the hairline that should not be there had I taken my time.

You can use the clone stamp brush or the paint brush at a low opacity. I am not going into all that detail here or I will have to add some pages to the magazine.

Now make the Texture layer active and visible (click the eyeball). I prefer the Spot Healing brush here. Don't be in a rush. Make sure your Color layer is visible.

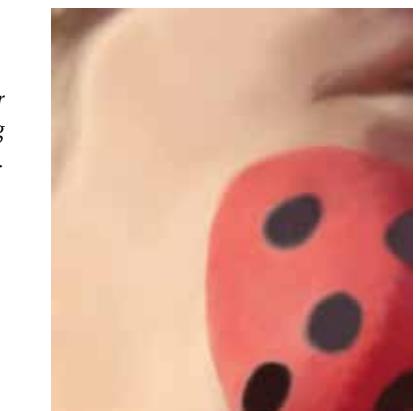
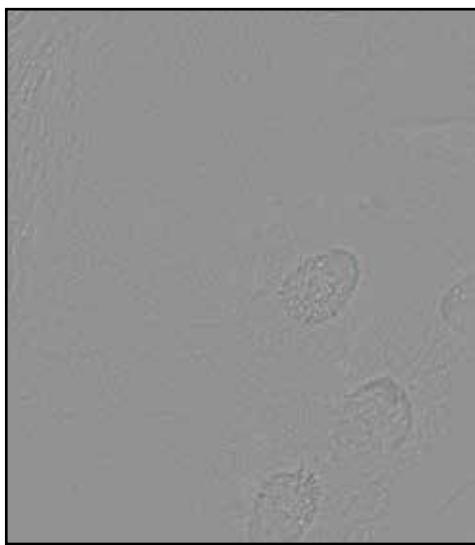
All done. There are some great YouTube videos on this. Just do a search for Photoshop Frequency Separation. They will go into greater detail than this. Don't get bothered if they do something a little different than I have.

Now the surprise. I bet you guessed it - if you email me I will send you the action to use. The action will save you a good amount of time and you won't have to remember what order and what layer blend mode that was suppose to be.

Ken@2xsd.com



This is what my Texture layer looked like by itself.



The Color layer after everything was done.



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