

» Introduction

Art, being bartender, is never drunk. —Randall Jarrell

Working in the darkroom I'd marvel at the moments of magic: the image unfolding under the light of the enlarger, and appearing from nothing on the paper in the tray of developer. The magic when I process a digital image is comparable—but, for me, more powerful.

The Photoshop Darkroom shares these revelations with you: the great moments in which an apparently mundane or dark capture comes alive. Digital photography is one part photography, and one part software alchemy: creative post-processing.

A digital photographer who misses the opportunities that come after the photo is taken loses much of the power of the new medium. Therefore, a goal of *The Photoshop Darkroom* is to provide a framework of fundamental techniques you can use to enrich your creative work.

Ansel Adams compared his work to musical composition, saying his photographic negatives were the score and his prints the performance. With a digital photo, the RAW negative is the score, and how you post-process is the performance. *The Photoshop Darkroom* will jump start you on your journey towards peak post-processing performances.

Make no mistake: *The Photoshop Darkroom* is for photographers. Photoshop is a tool, just like the enlarger and chemicals in an old-fashioned darkroom.

Unlike some Photoshop books, in *The Photoshop Darkroom* I don't care about Photoshop except as a tool. Our concern is solely the ultimate image.

This is not a book about the latest bells and whistles in Photoshop. Almost everything I explain can be done with older versions of the program.

You should be aware that the screen shots in this book show Photoshop CS3. If you are using a different version of Photoshop, both functionality and appearance may vary a bit, though the fundamental techniques that I present will not change.

There's always more than one way to do anything in Photoshop. I make no claim that my way is the only way, or the best: only that my way works. Hopefully, seeing my way will spark your creativity.

In *The Photoshop Darkroom* I am blessed with the perfect co-author (who also happens to be my wife). Like me, Phyllis believes that before explaining something, one has to fully understand it.

For us, a book that encourages learning is about the student's work, not the teacher's. We will have done our job if this book gives you the techniques you need and the creative inspiration to have fun while making potent digital imagery.

Harold Davis



