

Creative Point of View

Photoshop from the creative to the practical

■ BY KATRIN EISMANN

Exposing Lightroom

The average American experiences thousands of advertisements every day. From the quasi information on the cereal box to the star athletes whose uniforms are crazy quilts of product names, to the planted products in television shows and movies, it's impossible to avoid mass marketing.

With Project Photoshop Lightroom (www.project-photoshoplightroom.com), Adobe Systems broke the mold of overtly commercial marketing campaigns and undertook a daunting schedule to introduce two-dozen college photography programs to Photoshop Lightroom, Adobe's dedicated photographic-workflow and -enhancement application. From the beginning of September 2006 to mid-December, Colin Finlay, a talented photojournalist and commercial photographer (<http://colinfinlay.com>); Lou Desiderio from Synergy Communications; and the inexhaustible Julieanne Kost, Adobe's Digital Imaging Evangelist, crisscrossed the country to expose photography students, faculty, and local professionals to Adobe Photoshop Lightroom.

I had the good fortune to attend three of the New York-based events and, admittedly, I walked into the first event expecting a pitch, a commercial, and a snake-oil salesman (not really). With Project Photoshop Lightroom, however, Adobe took a new and more valuable approach to marketing, proving that if you have a good product developed from the ground up for your target audience, you don't need to wrap it in over-the-top marketing hype. The approach was to let people try it, which Adobe did with its highly successful public beta trial of Lightroom; let people learn about it via Julieanne's refreshingly unscripted presentations to small groups of professionals; and let students (the profes-

sionals and influencers of tomorrow) work with it to create compelling images.

The impact of images

In each school, the event began with a presentation of Colin Finlay's well-considered images, which he quietly narrated with carefully chosen words that addressed difficult topics of gut-wrenching hunger, murderous violence, and the importance of bearing witness. Colin's presentation had a slow cadence that drew the audience in, allowing us to study the images without feeling bombarded. Not one person in the New York audience left during the presentation—rare for New Yorkers who supposedly have more important things to do than whatever they're doing at the moment!



Image for fashion magazine

NADIRAH ZAKARIYA



Polo grounds, Santa Barbara

ALAN KIM BOLING, JR.



Syracuse, New York

JESSE NEIDER

The next morning, Colin met with 12–18 photography students to introduce an assignment that involved the local community: from the polo grounds in Santa Barbara, California, to exploring cultural diversity in Syracuse, New York, to creating fashion magazine-ready images at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City (see images).

Each project challenged the students to concentrate on one subject, work under tight deadlines, be resourceful if the weather didn't cooperate or the models didn't show up, and most importantly produce outstanding work.

To encourage the students to take better images, rather than "keeping the shutter pressed and hoping for the best," each student was given only one 2-GB Compact Flash card. After the shoot, the students returned to the computer lab where they imported the images into Photoshop Lightroom, embedded copyright information, and selected their eight best images from the day's shoot. (This was often the most challenging part of the day, as every photographer knows we're in love with all of our images and it's hard to choose one over the other.) Photoshop Lightroom has a wonderful Compare feature that allows photographers to compare similar images to identify the best shot.

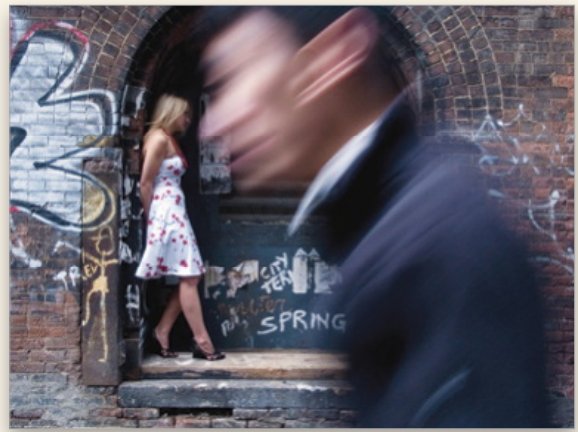


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After making the selections, the students were encouraged to enhance and interpret the images in Lightroom's Develop module by enhancing exposure, color, and contrast and applying variations of grayscale conversions and split toning. As in every commercial photographic assignment, the deadline was looming. Soon after the students submitted their eight best images to Julieanne, they were invited to a casual dinner of Chinese takeout or pizza—a highly motivating factor for college students, as I remember.

After dinner, Julieanne presented a slide show of all the work, then one by one the students explained their work, and the group decided which images were the strongest. Once again, Lightroom was essential when a student's eight images were presented in Compare mode: The stronger images stood out quickly and it was easy to take the weaker ones out of

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PAM AND JERRY

Image for fashion magazine

consideration. During this editing process, Colin's photographic experience and quiet yet attentive demeanor were invaluable, as many students are reticent to talk about their work. Colin allowed them to concentrate on the images and in a few moments, they felt at ease, and the selections were whittled down to what you can see in the galleries of each school's work at www.projectphotoshoplightroom.com.

The image is the message

As the students showed me, Adobe Photoshop Lightroom allows the user to concentrate on the image, not the technology. These students had the briefest introduction to the application and after the shoot, they were completely at home moving back and forth in the Lightroom modules to make selections, process images, and export them for the slide show.

With Project Photoshop Lightroom, Adobe showed the value of including higher education in their marketing while at the same time recognizing that this media-savvy audience doesn't need overworked sales pitches. The students and faculty will never forget this experience of creating images that inspire, excite, and communicate...and isn't that the essence of photography?

CONGRATULATIONS

I'd like to congratulate Amy Stein, the first artist I featured in this column almost two years ago in the article "Guns to Goldfish" (see *Photoshop User*, Apr/May 2005, p. 40). Amy recently graduated with an MFA degree from the School of Visual Arts and is already being recognized in the contemporary art world. She was recently selected as one of ten from more than 14,000 entries for the Saatchi/Guardian "Your Gallery" competition in London (<http://arts.guardian.co.uk/features/story/0,,1925591,00.html>). ■