

Tactile Training for Photoshop – Notes

Section Five –Photoshop Edits, Monochrome Conversions and Printing

Now that you can confidently edit your images in a **RAW** editor or in **Lightroom's Develop** Module, why do you need **Photoshop**? Well the answer is that in **Photoshop (PS)** there are many creative tools and techniques that can only be applied by using '**Layers**'. Neither **The Adobe Camera Raw Editor** nor **LR** can handle **Layers** or **Filters** (these are special effects).

- Both **Elements** and **Photoshop** can handle **Layers** (by stacking **Images** or **Effects** one-on-top-of-another, and sometimes in a way that allows **Adjustments**. Also any **Text** on top of an image will always be placed on a **Text Layer** and if you want to make a **Composite Image** using several pictures you will need **Layers**.
- By putting **Filters, Effects or Adjustments** on a **Layer** you can later re-edit them; you can also change the **Blend Mode**, governing how the two layers interact.
- **All Layers** can have their **Visibility** turned on or off (**Eye Icon**) and they can be faded back from 100% - 0% using the **Opacity Slider**.
- The image today shows South Stack Lighthouse being edited in **Photoshop**. Top right is the now familiar **Histogram Panel**. At the bottom is the **Layers Panel**. You can see **Four Layers**. At the bottom is the **Background Layer** (this is the image that came from the RAW edit). Then we have an **Adjustment Layer** for **Colour Noise Reduction** – I used **NIK Dfine filter** it's a 3rd Party **Plug-In** for this layer.
- Next is a **Levels Adjustment Layer** where I can check and, if needed, fine-tune the **Histogram**. The outer **White and Black Points** were already set in RAW, and should be fine. This layer allows me to increase or decrease the Brightness of the Mid-tones by moving the mid-triangle.
- At the top of the **Layer Stack** is a **Black and White Adjustment Layer**. This turns the colour image below into a **Monochrome** (still in **RGB** Mode though). This layer is coloured **Blue** showing that it is currently the **Active Layer** in the **Stack**. And in the middle panel you can see the B&W panel where you can control each of 6 colours.
- When it comes to **B&W Conversions**, this is where **Elements** and **Photoshop** part company. The **B&W** conversion in **Elements** offers is much simpler; it offers a limited set of **Pre-Set** controls and adjusters for the **R-G- B channels** using 3 sliders. But in the right hands, some really good Monochrome images can be created.
- Most Images benefit from **Local Dodging** (lightening of areas) or **Local Burning** (darkening). These two tools live together half-way down the **Toolbar** - The **Dodge Tool** look like a Lollipop. Both these tools have **Options** that are set to affect only the **Highlights, Mid Tones or Shadows**. These tools are used with a brush and the effect is a painted on. Use a low **Exposure** setting around **5-15%** and go over areas to build up the effect. For Colour, the **Sponge Tool** can paint in **Local Saturation**.

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- We are well down the **Workflow** Chart and at this point your image should be looking good, with a well-adjusted **Histogram** and good colour or B&W tones. You also applied **Local Adjustments** with the **Dodge & Burn Tools** or the **Sponge Tool**.
- Now to remedy any blemishes we can use a combination of the **Clone Tool** or the **Spot Healing Tool**. For the first you select a **Source Area** (Alt-Left Click) and then overpaint defects with the source pixels. The **Spot Healing Tool** is even simpler, select a brush size just larger than the blemish, place circle over spot, left click and spots will disappear. Useful to remove spots on skin or sensor dust spots in skies.
- Now you are ready to **Print**. You set the size of your image when you **Cropped** it. Go back to the **Image Menu-Image Size** and recheck it e.g. **16 ins x 12 ins @ 300 dpi**.
- If all is well press **Print** and you will see your **Printer's Menu**. These vary but most will allow you to set the following: **Quality** – Choose **High or Best Picture**; **Paper Type**, **Paper Size** and **Paper Orientation (Landscape or Portrait)**.
- Double check everything and examine the **Print Preview Screen** to check that the image fits on the paper and is the right way around. (By the way don't worry if a Windows Print Preview has weird colours, it is not **Colour Managed** like a printer)
- If the printer menu offers a choice between **Perceptual** or **Relative Colorimetric** settings then just pick **Perceptual**. It's good for 95% of images. Press **Print**.....
- **Prints will usually be darker than a Screen Image** (you are using **Reflected Light** rather than **LCD Illumination** as in a monitor). This will be true even if your **Monitor is Correctly Calibrated**. If not happy then adjust some of the image settings and **Reprint** (Ansel Adams did – He made many B&W prints before accepting he had the best possible output)
- There are more advanced ways of using Photoshop or Lightroom to control the printer output with **International Colour Consortium (ICC) Profiles** for each Paper/ink and printer combination. But that's for another day.....
- If you have followed along with all **Five Parts** you should now be holding stunning 16" x12" print in your hands

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