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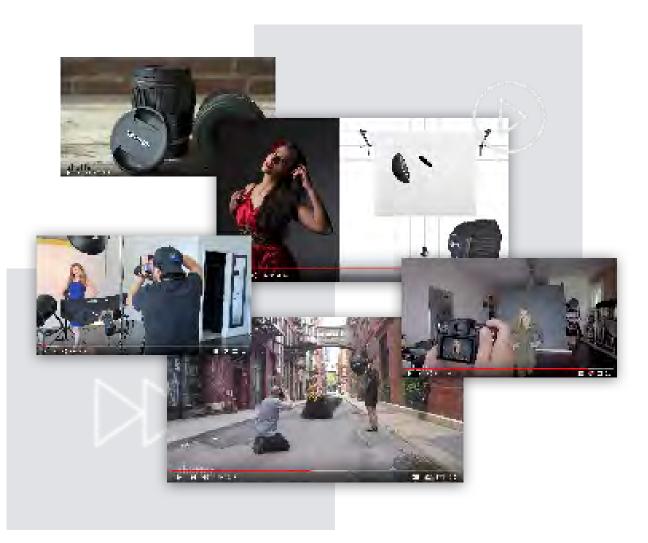


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Shutter Magazine's focus is on photography education. Our goal is to provide current insightful and in-depth educational content for today's professional wedding and portrait photographer. Shutter uses the latest technologies to deliver information in a way that is relevant to our audience.

Our experienced contributors help us create a sense of community and have established the magazine as one of the leading photography publications in the world.

Shutter Magazine: By photographers, for photographers.

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Are you photographing children?

This genre is fun, entertaining, and profitable. This month we focus on how to **maximize and grow your business** with some of the best children photographers in the world.

- Sal Cincotta

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ABOUT THE IMAGE: Here's the story of how this image was created. There are a number of images in this series, which I wanted to seem very "womb" like. We hand made very thin sheets of latex, almost transparent, which took many days of experimenting to get right. The liquid latex was painted over a flat, dust free surface and needed to dry slowly overnight. The results can often be uneven and totally unexpected. Many mornings we'd be faced with another failed attempt - often bubbles formed, which meant another day of experimentation. Finally we had a number of sheets, each carefully stretched over wooden frames and mounted vertically. My Studio Manager Natalie was draped in fabric of a similar tone to the latex (rendering her invisible in the image). Standing behind the sheet, she gently placed sleeping newborn Poppy's tiny feet against the latex, which had also been coated with fine powder. Everything about this image is real - no retouching necessary.

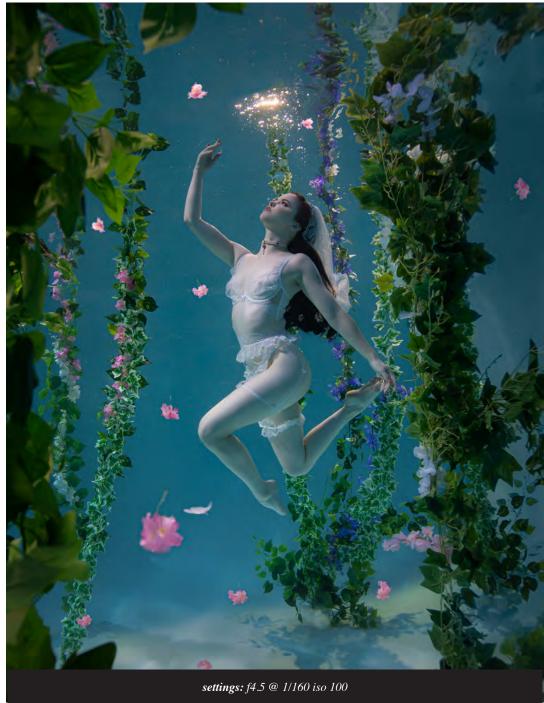
A BEGINNER'S GUIDE

TO UNDERWATER

PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY

with Brett Stanley





Being underwater can feel amazing! That weightlessness, the silence, the way our bodies move—it's truly a unique place, and taking our cameras underwater is a great way to create images that are unique as well. But with any specialized genre of photography, there are a few techniques that you need to master to make the most of it, and of course specialized gear. I'm going to outline some of the skills and equipment needed to start your underwater adventure.

WHAT IS UNDERWATER PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY?

Underwater photography covers a broad range of topics, from wildlife and scuba to sports, documentary, and even landscapes. But what I want to talk about is underwater portrait photography, which is the process of creating images that feature people in a posed setting underwater.

Just as a portrait photographer on land could shoot in a studio or on location, we have many options when it comes to shooting underwater. We can shoot in swimming pools or tanks, which is a controlled environment and what I call "underwater studio work," or we can shoot in the ocean or a lake, for example, which is uncontrolled and termed "open water work." Just like on land, these different environments can use similar techniques and gear, but they can require some different approaches as well, as I'll outline on the following page.



WHERE CAN I SHOOT UNDERWATER?

You can take underwater photographs anywhere there is water deep enough to submerge your camera. You can even shoot through the side of a fish tank. Like most photography there's no right or wrong way to do this, but I'm going to limit the scope of this article to places where you can comfortably submerge yourself and your camera underwater.



OPEN WATER

Any natural body of water, such as a lake, river, or the ocean is classed as open water. It's basically open to all the elements and is a reasonably hard environment to control. You'll encounter currents, varying water quality, and of course you're subject to whatever weather comes at you. For these reasons, shooting underwater portraits in open water can be very difficult and the results can be quite disheartening. But when all the elements come together, you can also make some amazing work that justifies all the effort—plus you can get some stunning underwater landscape!



CLOSED WATER

A swimming pool is a great example of closed water as it is highly controllable. You're not subject to currents in the same way as open water, and you can tweak the chemical levels to make sure the water clarity is top-notch. If it's an outdoor pool, you might still be at the mercy of the weather, but at least you have a nice stable environment to create your images. This means you can control the lighting as well as the look of the pool, just like you would do in a dry studio, but it is just that: an empty studio space for you to create in.

HOW DO I WATERPROOF MY CAMERA?

The one thing that separates regular dry-land cameras and those used for underwater photography is their ability to be waterproof. Water and electronics don't mix very well, but luckily we have some great options for keeping our devices watertight whilst we create some awesome underwater photographs.

If you're looking to take your expensive DSLR underwater for better image quality than say a GoPro or your smartphone, there are a few affordable options, like the Ewa Marine or Outex range of soft underwater housings. These are great if you just want to shoot in the pool or in some calm open water, but I wouldn't recommend them for shooting surf or going deep whilst scuba diving—they just aren't that tough. They are nice in that they allow access to almost all your camera controls directly through the soft container, but the deeper you go the more the bag might push on the buttons, so there's a trade-off.

In the more durable and versatile category are hard housings, which are made of either acrylic or metal and form a nice hard watertight shell for your camera. These are a bigger investment though and range dramatically in price with brands like SeaFrogs on the lower end and Aquatica or Nauticam at the top. These housings are very durable and can shoot in the most extreme conditions, but they are generally made for only one model of camera, so if you buy a new camera body, chances are you'll need to change the housing as well.







WHICH LENSES SHOULD I USE?

Before we talk about lenses, we need to discuss ports, which are the glass or acrylic windows in your housing that allow the lens to shoot through. There are two types: flat or dome.

Flat ports are just like a lens filter in that they are flat and fit the end of your lens allowing the camera to see out. They are low profile and fairly cheap, but they do magnify your lens focal length by about 25% due to the refraction of water. If you're using a flat port, make sure you know that your lens will automatically be zoomed in by about 1/4 once you're under the water.

Dome ports on the other hand are spherical, kind of like a half globe, that fit onto your housing and allow your lens to shoot through. They actually correct for the refraction of water, meaning that your lens' focal length stays the same above and below the surface. They also push the water away from the lens, allowing you to take shots both above and below simultaneously which can be very cool. Dome ports are much more expensive than flat ports, but the investment is worthwhile.

So, back to lenses! Most rules of dry photography apply here in terms of lens choice. If you're shooting full body then you want a wider lens and if you're shooting headshots, a longer lens is preferable. But-and this is a big but-when shooting underwater we need to take the water quality into account, which is to say that if the water is not very clear you need to be closer to the subject to get a crisper image. It's like shooting in a smoky room, and the closer you get to the subject the less smoke there is between you. Sometimes we need a wider lens so we can move closer to the subject, which is not something you'd do on land.

With this in mind, I prefer to shoot with a 16-35mm lens with a dome port (no magnification) as it gives me a nice wide focal length for full body or to push in closer if the water is dirty, and it gives me a wonderful headshot focal length for those closer and more intimate shots.





Image © Brett Stanley - Underwater Photographer



HOW DO I LIGHT UNDERWATER?

The best place to start with underwater lighting is natural or available light and you can treat it like you would a dry shoot. The same techniques apply, but with a few caveats. Once light passes through water it starts to change color quite quickly, from warm to cold, and its intensity drops as well, so take these things into account. You also get ripples from the water surface which can be quite distracting, so I suggest diffusing the direct sunlight with some light fabric to cut down on those harsh ripple lines and to give you a nice soft light to create with. You can also use reflectors in the water to bounce some of that light around.



SHOOT DAY TIPS

- If you feel unstable or too buoyant in the water, wear a quick-release weight belt.
- Have your model practice breathing out their air and sinking. It will help them look more natural under the water.
- Using a faster shutter speed will help the motion blur and a smaller aperture will help keep things in focus when everything is moving. I like to use AI Focus to keep things tack-sharp.
- Fabric can look amazing in the water, especially organza and silk.
- If eyes are starting to hurt, keep some moisturizing eye drops and water to rinse with by the edge.

Have fun! There are so many ways to create amazing images underwater.



Brett Stanley is an award-winning underwater portrait photographer based in Los Angeles, California. He's also the presenter of The Underwater Podcast, editor of *Waterproof Magazine*, and an educator/mentor for underwater photographers.

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"Cheap" rarely works with anything in life and it surely doesn't work with professional lighting. Im not debating that there are give-gets with every decision we make. It is truly no different than the decisions we make with our camera and lenses or the computers we buy. There are always trade-offs.

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how to get the **BESS BESS POSES** OUT OF MEN

with Vanessa Joy



When you work as a photographer, you're often dealing with subjects who aren't professional models. This puts more responsibility on you to coax good poses out of the subject. Today, I'd like to give you some useful tips for doing this when your subject is a man, or someone who wants to portray a masculine image. There are a variety of ways to combine body positioning, lens choice and angles to make your subject appear more masculine. Let's take a look at some of them.

POSING BASICS

First, I'd like to talk about the basic positions your subjects can pose in and how to tailor those to men. Although these are natural positions people use every day, they can present some challenges in a photography setting. The biggest challenge comes when working with people who have no modeling experience. When people are asked to pose for a photograph, they often take a very unnatural stance, as if the pressure made them forget how to sit, stand or lean. Providing them with some guidance can help here.

STANDING POSES

For standing poses, you want to start from the bottom. The feet are the foundation of the standing pose and if the feet aren't right, nothing else will be. I like to tell men to pretend they are riding a skateboard towards me. The stance provides a nice foundation, and it's an easy pose for them to assume. From there, they should point their front foot slightly towards the camera and stick their chest out towards the main light. A nice wide chest brings out the masculinity and exudes confidence and power.

A common point of confusion in standing poses is what to do with the thumbs. Should they be in the pocket or out of the pocket? There may be some obscure reason to choose one over the other, but ultimately, it doesn't matter. In this instance, having the subject do whatever is most comfortable to them will work fine and aid you in getting a pose that doesn't look artificial.



settings: f4.0 @ 1/200 iso 400

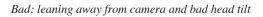


settings: f4.0 @ 1/200 iso 400

Good: good head tilt

Good: leaning towards camera and good head tilt







settings: f4.0 @ 1/200 iso 400

Bad: good head tilt but leaning away from camera



Bad: higher angle and wrong head tilt

LEANING POSES

When your subject is leaning against something, you want to be careful of the angles you shoot from and the pose they are in. For example, if the man has his knee bent and his foot placed flat against the wall he's leaning against, certain angles can make it look like his leg has disappeared. I also like to try and mirror the positions I'll be asking the model to get into. Leaning requires a certain weight distribution, and some poses that look great may be difficult to hold.



Image © Vanessa Joy

Good: lower angle correct head tilt





SITTING POSES

To begin a sitting pose, just tell the model to sit in whatever way makes them comfortable. This prevents the whole "forgetting how to sit" thing I discussed earlier. Once they are sitting, they'll probably be in a pretty symmetrical pose as that's how we tend to naturally sit in a formal situation. It doesn't provide for the most interesting photos though, so break up the symmetry a bit. Have the model put one foot further ahead than the other, and do something similar with the arms. The post should look natural, but casual, or at least more relaxed than someone who was just commanded to sit and is dutifully obeying orders.

One more thing to keep an eye out for in sitting poses is the jacket of a groom, or really anyone wearing a jacket. It should be unbuttoned when taking a sit-down photograph to help facilitate more natural movement and poses.

POSING TIPS

Now that we've gotten some general positioning out of the way, I'd like to talk more about how to bring out that masculinity and create more interesting photographs.



Bad: bad angle, missing leg

Good: correct head tilt towards lower shoulder

USING ANGLES

Here, I'm specifically referring to the angles of the man's body. Some angles are very dainty and feminine, while others are better at presenting a masculine image. The first angle to pay attention to is the tilt of the head. When shooting a photograph, perspective is going to put the farther-away shoulder a little lower in the shot. For men, the head should be tilted towards the lower shoulder. Tilting towards the upper shoulder would create a more feminine look.

For the arms, 90-degree angles will provide a strong, masculine body language. This could mean arms crossed in front of the chest, resting on the knee at an angle, or whatever else feels right at the moment. Just remember, the more acute the angle is - that is to say, the closer the forearm gets to touching the bicep - the more you'll be moving away from masculine territory and into a playful, feminine vibe.

ADDING MOVEMENT

I've talked several times now about making the shot seem more natural. A great way to do that is to add some motion to the shot. If the subject is standing, have them slowly walk towards you as you shoot. Ask them to check their watch, or adjust their cufflinks, or whatever else might seem natural. Capturing these natural motions will help breathe life into the photo.

GETTING THE BEST SMILE

Sitting isn't the only time people can act very unnatural during a photography session. Many people, when asked to smile, will pull their head back and tuck their chin into their neck. Even if only done slightly, this can give all but the most chiseled of men the appearance of a double chin and detract greatly from the photograph. Keep an eye out for this and correct it when it happens. You can do so by asking them to stick their chin out like they are mimicking a cartoon turtle, or having them pull their forehead up and towards you like they are skeptical of something you said. Just be careful that they don't overdo it in the other direction.



Bad: head tilt towards higher shoulder



Good: head tilt towards lower shoulder



SHOOTING TIPS

The pose isn't the only thing that will help your male subjects present in a more masculine fashion. The way you take the shot can have an impact as well. Let's look at what your camera work can do to improve the outcome of your photos.

BRINGING OUT THEIR MASCULINITY

I've already talked about how a strong chest presents a masculine image. If you reduce the focal length of your lens, it'll bring more of their chest into the photograph and aid in that process. Similarly, you can get more chest and upper body in the shot if you shoot from a lower angle. In addition to a more chest-dominant shot, lower angles will make the subject appear taller and more commanding.

GETTING THE BEST SHOT

Once you've got the initial pose down, don't feel as though you have to stay still and take the shot from the exact angle you posed them from. With the subject still, move around them and take some shots. This can lead to some interesting angles and help you develop an eye for which angles work best with which poses.





Vanessa Joy has been a professional wedding photographer in New Jersey since 2002, and an influencer in the photographic community for years. Since starting VanessaJoy.com in 2008, she has taught photographers around the globe at almost every major platform in the industry (LearnPhotoVideo.com). Vanessa has been recognized for her talent and business sense at the renowned industry events CreativeLIVE, Clickin' Moms, WPPI and ShutterFest. Her peers love her informative, open-book style of teaching.

website: vanessajoy.com instagram: @vanessajoy



ARE \\ **PRINT**COMPETITIONS

WORTH IT FOR PHOTOGRAPHERS?

with Melody Smith

41 behindtheshutter.com



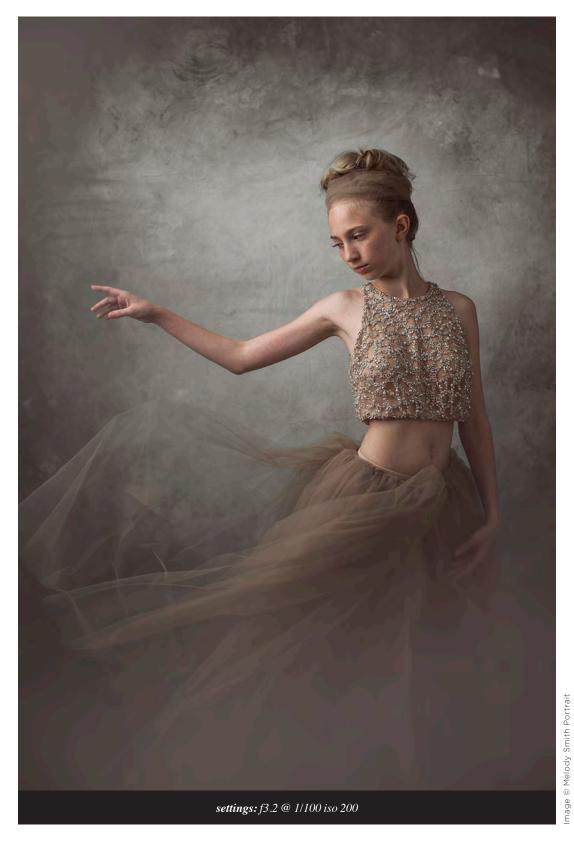
2014. I will never forget that year. I was in a place with my work where I did not know how to move forward. My friends and colleagues at the time could no longer offer me advice other than "this is amazing." But deep down I knew I was not there. I had seen amazing work. I needed—as my good friends Luke and David Edmonson have stated—refinement. This little term changed my entire body of work in the course of seven years of WPPI and PPA/IPC print competition. In that first year I entered three photos with the help and support of my best friend and colleague, Jennifer Brindley. My first image judged was in the premier category. I was a wreck! My heart was beating so loud I was sure the entire silent room could hear it and identify me as the maker. Then the whole room erupted in cheers as my scores came across as GOLD. My life in that moment was forever changed and of course my soul screamed with validation. Then the conversation on the image began (every image entered receives verbal love feedback) and Jerry Ghionis walked in the room and saw me crying in the back like a lunatic. I can still hear him in my head in his Australian accent, "Was that your image!? Beautiful work." He hugged me and I took home my first trophy of second place.

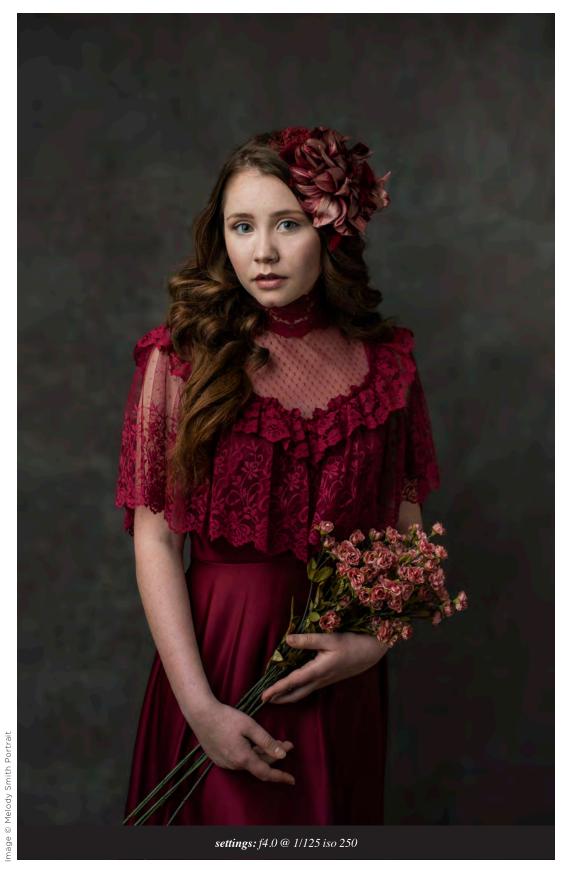




The following years I sat for countless hours in these rooms for judging. Hours upon hours. They began to know my face as I moved from the back row to the front row behind the judges to see what they saw, to be involved. Some do not see the privilege that takes place in those rooms. The hours spent looking at wonderful images, seeing vulnerability, and watching stories be told in a few moments. But for me, this has been the greatest learning experience and joy of my life. There have been years I have not done so well. In the last seven years, I have earned over 70 accolades and 14 placements with WPPI and PPA/IPC. I choose these print competitions because they honor the greatest of craftsmanship. When sitting in these rooms watching judging take place, I have learned the greatest, most important tools to express my visual voice. Technical abilities only get you so far and I am only slightly a technical photographer. Images MUST speak.







First, the greatest images demand that you look at them (impact). They ask you to read them. Little hints here and there reaffirm and reward the viewer. I have learned terms such as "crash points" (thanks Jill Hillenga!) where the viewer's eyes are taken away from the story to a distraction. I have learned about gesture, where the hands tell you where to look or how a subject is feeling. I have discovered how patterns and shapes can reward a viewer for taking the time to see a portrait or work. I have learned so much about symbolism. Sometimes these things require a bit more brain work from the viewer, but once you see it the reward is astounding. The thing is that when you enter into actual live judged print competitions you are able to hear conversations about the world before you. I have found myself mesmerized in these rooms. Sometimes I have missed the story then a judge sees it and I am filled with tears of pride for the maker. And even with my own work, my friend David told me to stop asking myself why NOT this one and WHY this one!

It took me several years to gain the coveted gold distinction and a first place in a category. I actually thought I was going to get a 79 on it (not a merited image with WPPI) and when I did get that 98 score, I was overwhelmed. I immediately did what David Edmonson and Luke told me: I asked, "Why this one?" And I saw it. I saw the brilliant composition and impact from the dominant mass of my subject. I saw all the little confirming shapes and patterns mimicked in her dress, hair and crown. I saw the presentation of the dandelions framing her, ironically imbalanced, placed in a perfect circle. I saw this story of this little wonderful wondering girl proclaiming herself perfectly as the dandelion queen.



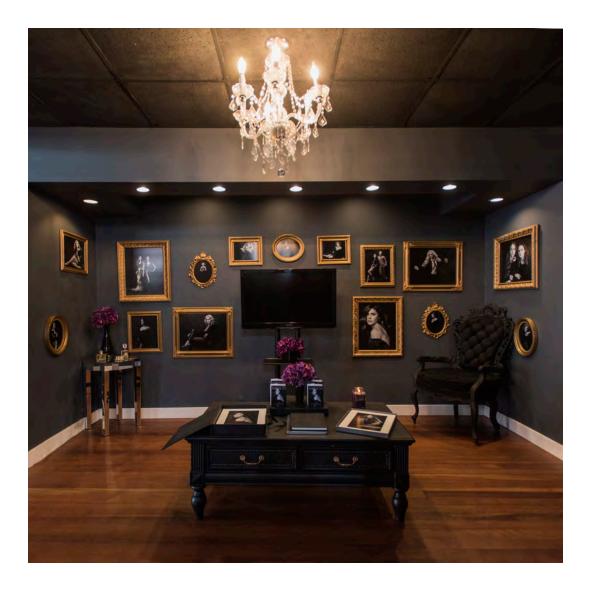
While it may seem like I am tooting my own horn here with those statements, I find myself reading people's comments who do not understand why they DIDN'T win. My question for them is, "What did you do right?" Then keep doing that. Make it better. Perfect it with technique. To achieve any award in our industry that is so self-isolated in many ways drives a maker to strive harder towards—that term again—refinement. It also makes you become more of a storyteller, for yourself and your clients. But really what makes it worth it are not the awards and accolades, it is the process of learning what inspires you. This deep-down connection we have with image making, what makes us look, feel, and connect to a portrait or any image. Because what we do is make people feel something. We long for that. No matter if you are shoot and burn or spend months designing. The end result is making someone, the client or your audience, FEEL something deep in their soul, to connect to an idea, another world, or a moment.







Many will ask regarding competition, "What is the point? An award? Self-validation?" Oh man. It is so far from what is gained. Print competition is not a contest. It is more of an evaluation of a set of skills judged by experienced peers. These skills are imperative to improving not only technical abilities, but also your ability to become a great storyteller. I have sat through hundreds of hours of judging watching thousands of prints from all genres be measured against the elements of design, creativity and storytelling. I prefer to enter print competitions and not digital. The process does not end with a digitized version that will be forgotten in a year. I strive to create heirlooms of art for my clients to display in their homes. Becoming a master print maker is something I feel every skilled photographer should strive toward. Not only do print competitions provide insight into your technical and creative, but they also speak to your final finished product.





I have also heard many times in my 20-year career that print competitions do not earn you clients or money. I say, horse shit. Let me tell you what this has done for not only my confidence with my visions for clients, but what my clients SEE! They walk into my studio and my trophies are placed in a dark corner by the restroom. They likely never see them. But what they do see are the 100-plus prints in a trunk displayed right by my makeup station. They ask questions such as, "Who is that?! That is amazing! What is that ribbon? What does it all mean?!" At that point I am afforded the pleasure of telling them my personal journey towards connection and expression. It will let you imagine how every single client's mind wonders, dreams, and most of all how that inspires them to not only trust me, but how to take a chance and let go for the sake of an eternal portrait.



Melody Smith is an international award-winning double master photographer, makeup artist, and stylist specializing in fine art and contemporary portraits for individuals 10 and up. Her full-service portrait studio is located in Petersburg, Virginia.

website: melodysmithportrait.com instagram: @melodysmith_portrait

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DOWN & DIRTY CREATIVE EDITING IN LIGHTROOM CLASSIC & PHOTOSHOP

with Dustin Lucas

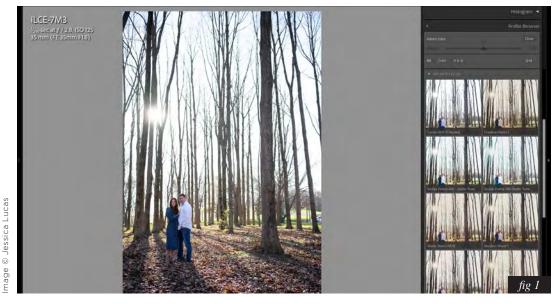
When it comes to creative editing my work, I am constantly pushing quality, but I also need to edit faster where it makes sense. Sneak peeks, or what I like to call down and dirty edits, are something I love to offer days after a session to take my client's experience to the next level.

Now, it's not just about editing fast and throwing something on social media; these edits are leading indicators for my in-person sales, or IPS. I use these images to get impactful reactions from clients to forecast what they may potentially spend. It's all about showing more to sell more. If they don't buy all the creatives, these edits are still used for marketing and booking the next client, remember that! End of the day, I want to know if I should double down on creatives to sell more or stick to my standard recipe. Whether I have two clients on deck or 10, editing fast allows me to scale this experience versus only offering it when I have time.

There are dozens of ways to edit an image in Lightroom and Photoshop. Here is how I use both programs to accomplish this. In Lightroom I build presets specifically to bulk apply custom profiles and local adjustments like the radial and graduated filters. This lets me fly through images without having to go into Photoshop every time. Photoshop allows me to apply actions on more complex edits as well as using Content Aware to remove unwanted distractions. I have a dodge and burn selection technique to really dial in my creativity as well. Let's dive into Lightroom to get some edits started.

1. LIGHTROOM PROFILE AND LOCAL ADJUSTMENTS

I am a huge fan of efficiency and Lightroom offers this like no other program, along with a powerful workflow to handle thousands of images. I exclusively use my Custom Profiles to get started on an edit. If you are interested in learning how to build these, check out my article from the February 2020 issue of *Shutter Magazine*: "5 Reasons to Build Custom Lightroom Profiles." This is the first step because it immediately shifts color and tonality in the image. (Fig. 1) You can see that after applying the profile Matte Warm NEW, my image immediately stands out from the shot out of camera, or SOOC. (Fig. 2) Now, we aren't done by any means, because my subjects are getting lost in the background. We need to dodge our client and burn down the background.

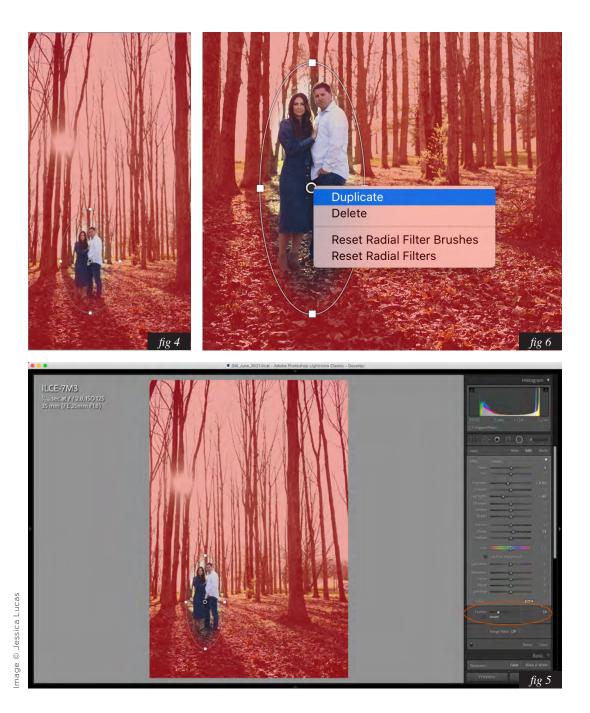




Let's jump into my favorite dodge and burn tool in Lightroom, the Radial Filter, by holding shift and striking the m key. Understanding how this tool works is very important. Simply drag and oval over the subject. You'll notice everything outside the oval gets an effect applied. (Fig. 3)



To see where this overlaps on the client you can strike the o key to see our mask. (Fig. 4) Lower the exposure to burn down the background and with the Mask Overlay turned on you can lower the feather effect to remove some of this off the subject. (Fig. 5) Now, with manipulating the mask you can reshape the entire oval by holding shift and changing the size. Another way to only extend one side is to hold option while changing the size. After I dial in the background burn effect, I right-click on the pin and duplicate it. (Fig. 6) This saves all my work and lets me invert the mask to dodge our client. (Fig. 7) Now I can lift exposure and shadows to separate them from the background a bit better. (Fig. 8)



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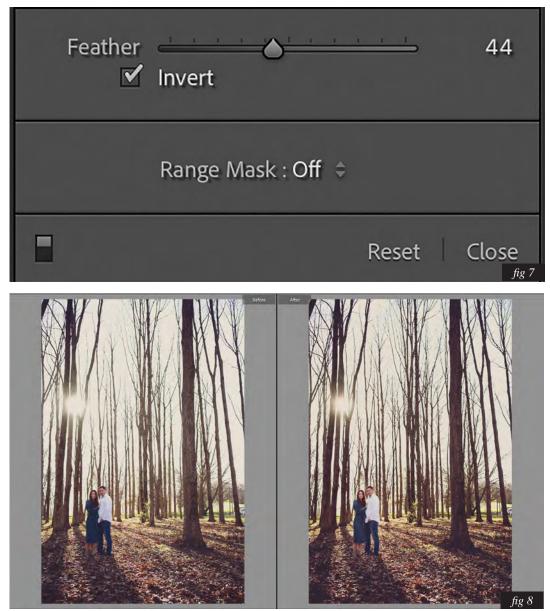
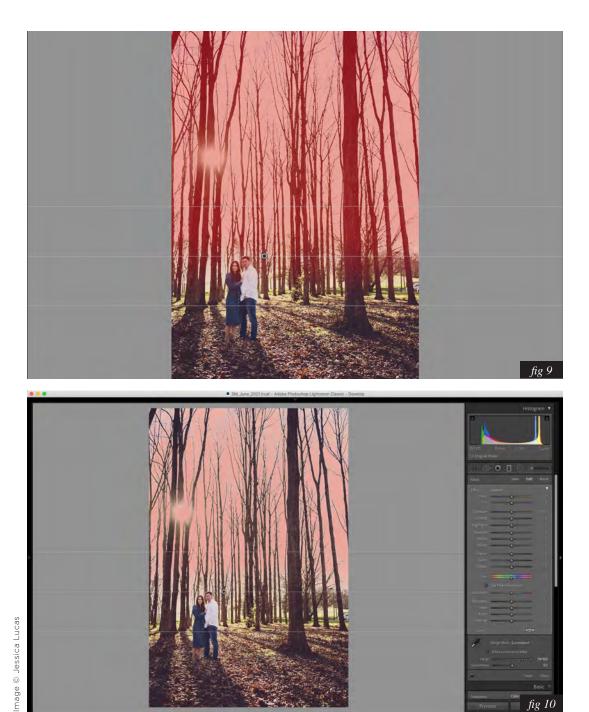
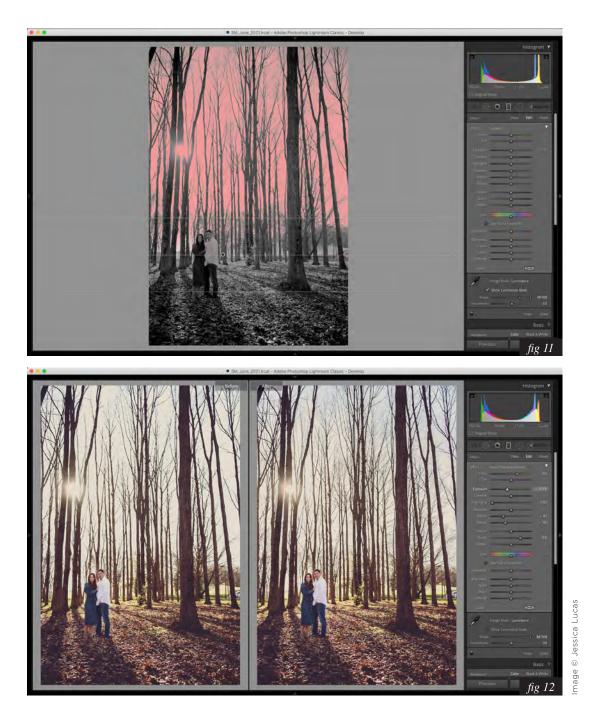


Image © Jessica Lucas

Another great tool is the graduated filter to burn on our blown-out sky. We can strike the m key to open this tool, drag and drop downward to control the direction of the gradient, and bring it down to the horizon. (Fig. 9) Now you'll notice this applied the effect on our client. Use the Range Mask tool to apply a Luminance mask and use the Luminance eyedropper to pick a bright tone in the sky. (Fig. 10) With the Show Luminance Mask option turned on we can see exactly where this is applied to dial in. (Fig. 11) Now we can drop highlights, whites, exposure and temp to bring back the sky. Boom—this is really starting to look client-ready just from Lightroom! (Fig. 12)





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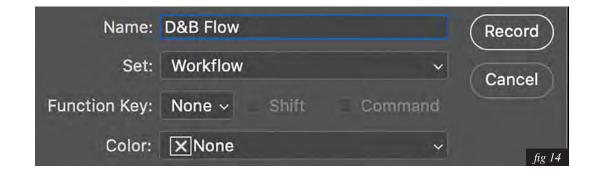
2. PRESET WORKFLOW AND ADJUSTING

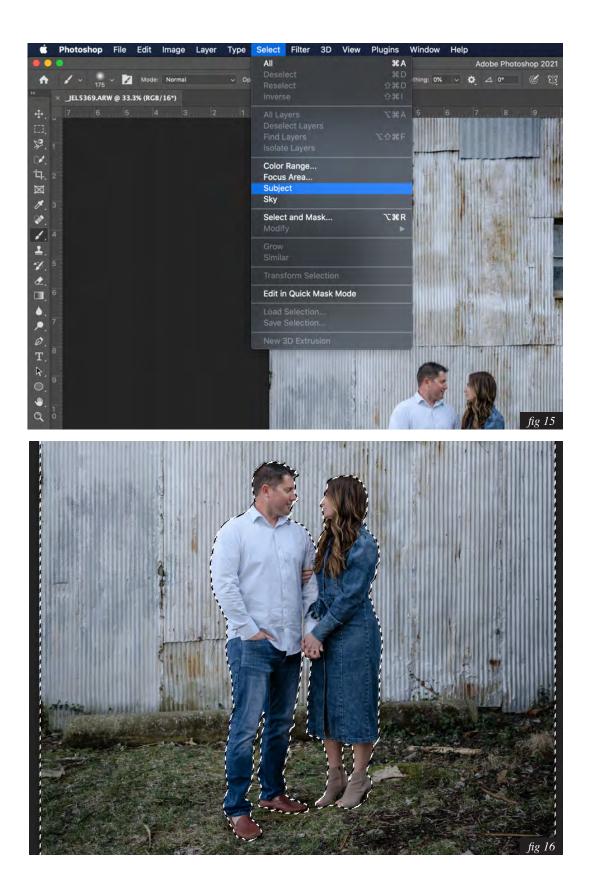
Where Lightroom really outperforms other programs is the ability to make presets for bulk applying, or in this case we can sync settings. Once we sync settings we can easily tweak our local adjustment pins to match up to the subject. (Fig. 13ab) This makes creative editing insanely faster than Photoshop. With Lightroom there is no need to start from scratch per image and this is exactly what I need in busy season to have continuity in my creative edits. If I want to take my edits to the next level, I can edit in Photoshop quickly.



3. PHOTOSHOP WORKFLOW & ACTIONS

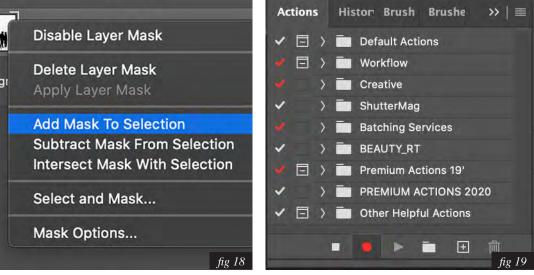
For my Lightroom workflow, I like to use the Edit In option to bring images into Photoshop so after I am done editing they are saved alongside the raw files. When working in Photoshop, I like to save actions for repeated tasks such as dodge and burn layers. Before I start editing I will record an action to save for future use. (Fig. 14) Once the action is recorded, I can quickly select the subjects by going to Select in the top menu bar and choosing Subject. (Fig. 15) In order to make a burn layer for the background, we have to inverse the selection by holding shift, command, and striking the i key. (Fig. 16) Then we are ready to burn down the background with a Curves adjustment layer.





Once I select Curves, I can pull the curve downward to darken the background since the subject is masked out. (Fig. 17) Once I fine-tune the settings to make it a universal setting, I can start with the dodge aspect of the edit. By right-clicking on the Curves layer mask, clicking Add Mask to Selection and inversing the selection, I am ready to make the next layer. (Fig. 18) I choose Curves again and drag the curve upward to brighten the subjects. Once I am fine-tuned I then add additional layers for skin smoothing, white recovery and other basic corrective adjustments. Once I am done I can save the action and use it on other images. (Fig. 19)





Of course there are some limitations to the Subject select tool when it comes to acute angles like under his chin (Fig. 20) and also where the skin blends into the background. This can be caught when you select the layer mask and strike the \key. (Fig. 21)

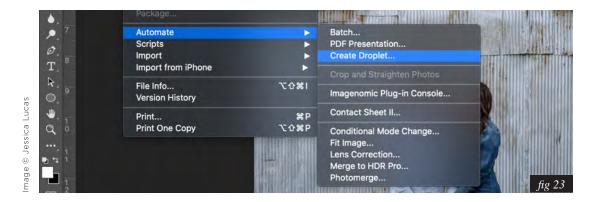


These areas can be quickly cleaned up with the brush tool, but our goal isn't to perfect these edits—I want them to be good enough to show on the web. Once they are cleaned up I'll dial in masking, of course. (Fig. 22ab)



4. LIGHTROOM TO PHOTOSHOP WORKFLOW

If you want to use custom profiles in Lightroom and run my dodge and burn action in Photoshop, you can. First we need to make a droplet in Photoshop by going to File>Automate>Create Droplet. (Fig. 23) We can choose where to save the droplet, name it the same as the action, select the action and choose Save and Close. I recommend making your action have Save and Close included. Then you won't have to save new files every time. We also need to select the option Override Action "Save As" Command. (Fig. 24)



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Next we need to create an export preset. For this workflow I want these files to be in the same folder as the raw files, so I can choose to export to the original folder. For file settings, I choose TIFF in order to keep layers and have a larger file capacity. The last important setting is to have the images run the droplet script. (Fig. 25)

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Once I save the preset I can quickly apply it to multiple images at a time. Once the export and droplet are done, the last step is to re-import the TIFF files back into Lightroom. Boom—now we are done! (before/after)



5. THE RESULTS

Now that I've set up a solid workflow, I can keep up year-round on delivering sneak peeks or down and dirty edits to my clients. By using both Lightroom and Photoshop I can batch multiple images at once to save a ton of time. In Lightroom, it's all about profiles and local adjustments to get started. After I create presets and sync develop settings, editing couldn't be easier. With Photoshop, everything always starts out with long step-by-step processes. Once I create actions and droplets I can turn images so much faster. By using Lightroom for custom profiles and Photoshop for my dodge and burn technique, I am set. If you want to offer quick creatives for your client, I highly recommend working efficiently and trying out these techniques. You got this!





Dustin Lucas is a full-time photographer and educator focused on the wedding industry and the academic world. After achieving his Master of Fine Arts degree, a career opportunity opened once he began working with Evolve Edits. Through teaching photography classes and writing about photography, Dustin continues to expand his influence on art and business throughout the industry.

website: evolveedits.com instagram: @evolveimaging



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5 EXPERT TIPS FOR **CHILD** PHOTOGRAPHY

with Anne Geddes

As I write this article from New York, it's mid-April and the world is still grappling with the effects of the coronavirus. I can only assume that by publication date, not much will have changed. My career has always revolved around spreading joy, and like many of you I've found the last 15 months or so very challenging with the virus. It's good to mention this, because I have no doubt that many of you are feeling the same way. I was very nervous about doing studio work during this crisis and did'nt do any shoots between March and November of 2020, when I shot a cover image for L'Uomo Vogue Italy. The logistics around planning this shoot were vastly different from any projects I've done over my entire career.

When I was invited to once again contribute to *Shutter's* annual children's issue by recommending five tips for photographing children, the first thing that came to mind was the importance of safety on set in this new world we're all navigating together.

1. COVID SAFETY ON SET

Whether you're a photographer with your own studio or you mainly shoot on location, you'll need to have your own set of rules to follow diligently. Here in New York, I don't have my own studio. I regularly work out of Blonde Studios (Blonde + Co) using a great freelance crew of generally the same people every time. Every evening a cleaning crew cleans and disinfects the whole studio—every surface is wiped down and there are disinfectant stations and signage everywhere.

L'Uomo Vogue wanted a cover image of two little babies wearing tiny bucket hats, plus a single baby in a double-page spread inside the magazine. I recommended that the babies needed to be twins, because in Covid times I wasn't going to be placing individual babies next to each other, nor have more than one family at a time in the studio. Normally for a shoot like this, I would have maybe five babies there on the day in order to guarantee a great image of two together. What a luxury that would have been! We began a search for twins aged around seven months (meaning they would be sitting confidently but not able to crawl).

On the day of the shoot everybody was temperature tested on arrival and asked to complete a detailed health questionnaire relating to any exposure to Covid. We wore masks at all times. One set of twins arrived at 9:30 a.m., a single baby came at midday and another set of twins arrived early afternoon. In between, everything was wiped down, including the set. I always work with a trusted nurse who stands next to the babies on set at all times. A nurse is a standard requirement in New York for any commercial shoots. The toys we have to distract the babies were able to be sterilized in between use. The day worked very well and made me totally confident that I could be shooting in a completely Covid-safe way.



Publication: February 2021 Issue of L'Uomo Vogue Italia



2. DO ONE THING, AND THEN ANOTHER THING

This probably sounds strange and it's not even good grammar, but this has literally been my mantra for years. What I mean is don't try to attempt too much at once when working with babies. They have super short attention spans and you can't make them do anything they don't want to do. Make it as easy as possible for them and you. Everyone loves images of babies because they know that what they're seeing is real.



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3. EVERYTHING NEEDS TO REVOLVE AROUND THE BABY

This may sound pretty obvious, but I've seen other shoots where the babies have all been asked to arrive at the same time and they end up being kept waiting far too long. It's a recipe for chaos. Make sure everything is ready to go before babies come to the studio. Have your lighting set up and tested beforehand, and organize a special welcoming area for the parents and babies with changing tables, spare diapers, etc. Make them feel valued and special. Think of anything they may need and have it on hand. Don't just assume parents will arrive with everything. They will truly appreciate your thoughtfulness. By the way, I never have hot drinks such as tea or coffee on offer for parents for obvious safety reasons.

Don't overcrowd or overstimulate babies, particularly those babies who are old enough to interact with other people. They can quickly become tired or anxious and you want the absolute best from them when they're on set. I'm generally very quick when I'm shooting and when it's over, it's over. Don't keep pushing and pushing if you already have the shot. Parents are often very surprised that the shoot was done so quickly, but that's the best way to get the best from your young models.



4. DON'T KEEP FOLLOWING THE SAME FORMULA

You need to be telling your own story, which is unique to you. Don't fall into the easy trap of photographing to a formula. Ask yourself why you've chosen to photograph babies and young children. For me, it wasn't a conscious decision to specifically photograph babies, but I knew I wanted to tell my story of the miracle of new life. You're on an artistic journey of your own, and your work needs to come from a place of your own personal storytelling. Every shoot needs to be a progression for you. That's why you've chosen to be an artist. Of course, the age-old debate as to what constitutes art is always simmering beneath the surface among photographers. For me, a photograph is art if it does something more than record or decorate: if it causes the viewer to be awakened to an idea or visual experience they might not otherwise have had, allowing them to see and consider their own world afresh.





*pre-covid behind-the-scenes



1



5. KEEP IT SIMPLE

The "KISS" rule works every time. That's "keep it simple, stupid" and I tell myself this a lot! Not just in relation to my images, but also with my lighting. After all, there really is only one light source in nature, right? I do quite a bit of private portraiture. In fact, for the first 10 years of my career that's all I did, which was a great learning experience in how to deal with children of all ages. A beautiful classic portrait needs to stand the test of time. And the essence of a great child portrait for me is that the magic and the intangible energy of that child at that particular age is captured. Loose parameters are helpful in order to get the shoot underway and also to avoid total anarchy and chaos. But if you're too set with your ideas you'll miss the magic. I think of photography as creating magic out of thin air. And often magic happens suddenly, fleetingly, and completely surprises you. That's the best gift.



Anne's imagery singularly captures the beauty, purity and vulnerability of children, embodying her deeply held belief that each and every child must be "protected, nurtured and loved." A multiple *New York Times* bestselling author, accompanied by an array of global awards, Anne's photography has been treasured and enjoyed by many generations. Anne is an inductee in the International Photography Hall of Fame, joining a very select group of photographic luminaries. Anne is recognized as a Global Advocate for children.

website: annegeddes.com instagram: @annegeddesofficial

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CREATING CHILDREN'S PORTRAITS WITH IMPACT

with Kahran & Regis Bethencourt

As artists, we're constantly responding to the world around us. For years, we've photographed so many amazing kids that we felt needed a larger platform. We felt that for far too long we've seen a one-sided view of black culture, so it was important for us to share our own stories our own way. We decided to highlight the under-celebrated beauty of black culture that is rarely represented in its full glory.

We didn't want to just question traditional standards of beauty—we wanted to shatter them. We wanted to create images that flew in the face of the established spectrum of acceptable standards of black beauty. Within each image, we wanted to tell a story of a people who for centuries were artists and artisans, strategists and intellectuals, warlords and warriors, kings and queens.

That is how the AfroArt series was born. At its heart, it is a recognition and celebration of the versatility of black hair and its innate beauty. The purpose of the series is to illustrate the story of our royal past, celebrate the glory of the here and now, and even dare to forecast the future. As we ventured more into this project, we learned that it was much bigger than hair. Each child has their own personality and talents that we want to highlight in each subject we photograph.

We are grateful to be able to work with children around the world to tell their stories in our own unique way. We often say that we're more than just photographers. We've made it our mission to empower kids of color around the world by showcasing their beauty, uniqueness and creativity. We believe that the first step to success is imagining it, so we like to use our work as a stepping stone in each child's journey to success.



settings: f9.0 @ 1/160 iso 100



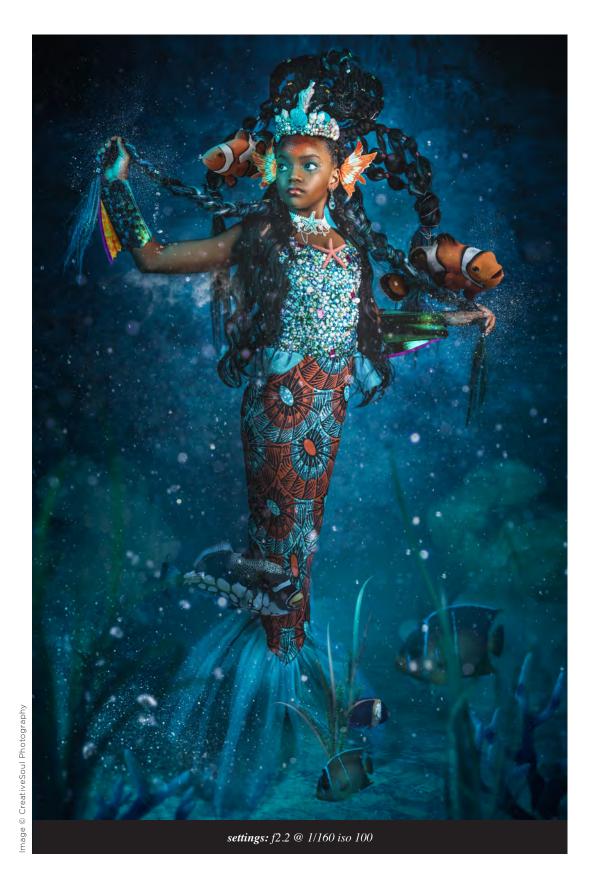
settings: f7.1 @ 1/160 iso 50



settings: f9.0 @ 1/160 iso 100



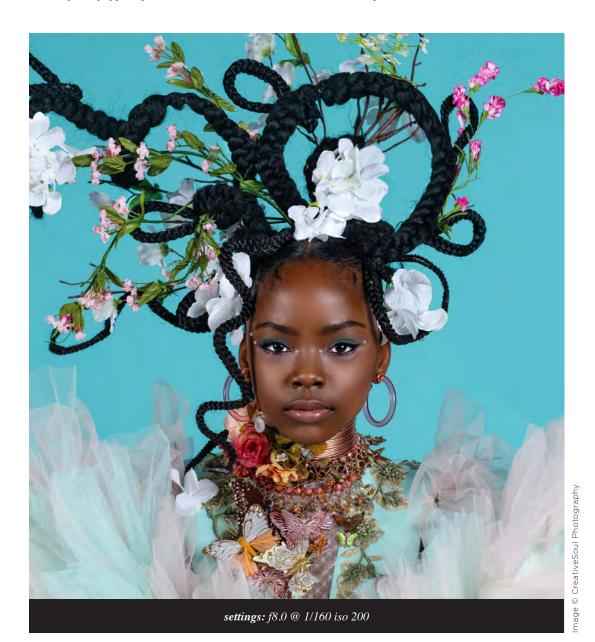
settings: f9.0 @ 1/160 iso 100



LET THEM DREAM

Before each shoot, we ask a single question of each child that we photograph: "If you could have the shoot of your dreams, what would it be?" This question alone has sparked some of our most creative shoots. Kids have vivid imaginations and have no limits when it comes to their dreams. It allows us to really get creative while allowing them to live out their childhood dreams. We've had a superhero ballerina, a zebra princess, a fairytale lion, an African samurai warrior and more.

One of the things we love most about photographing children is that they are honest and are a source of unlimited creativity. They typically lack that self-consciousness we seem to develop as adults.





PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

We often develop moodboards which give us an idea of the direction we'd like to go with our shoot. It also helps our team bring together a cohesive vision before the actual shoot. You can include things like hair, makeup and fashion inspiration, even color palettes so that you have a game plan before the shoot.

We are inspired by many things around us: hairstyles, cultural traditions, fashion, as well as our own childhoods and upbringing. We merge all of those things together to create unique portraits.

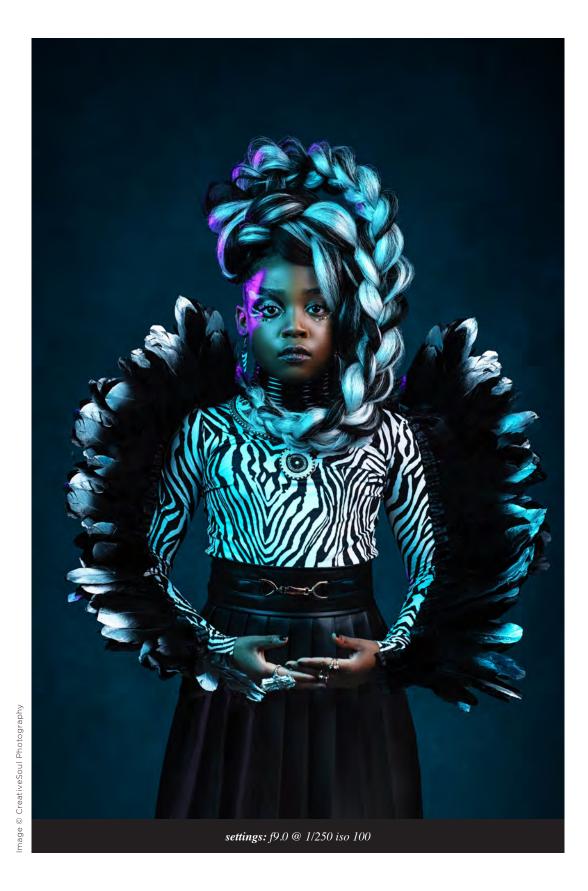
One piece of advice we'd suggest to new photographers is to give creatives room to be creative and allow them to show off their talents. We certainly don't claim to be makeup artists or hairstylists, so we allow our team members room to let their creative talents flourish. The moodboard helps keep everyone on the same page so that we're not going in different directions, but we enjoy seeing each team member add on their own creative elements.

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE DETAILS

Once we've determined the overall direction, we're typically gathering all of the elements that we think can help tell each child's story. Hair, makeup, jewelry and accessories are all part of the overall character's story. We often get creative by reusing existing elements in a completely new way. As creatives, it keeps us on our toes and forces us to think outside the box to make something old new again.

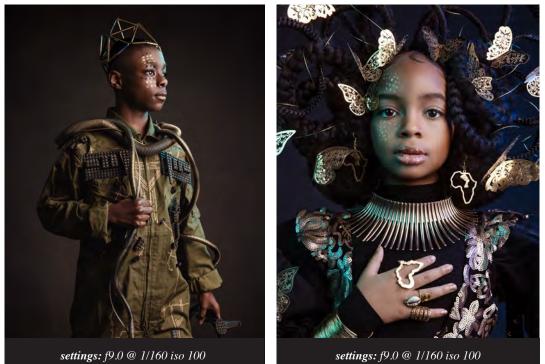


settings: f9.0 @ 1/160 iso 100



LIGHTING FOR IMPACT

We love using our portraits to make a statement. In each image, we see an opportunity for the viewer to experience the world through the eyes of the subject we're photographing. When we are lighting our subject, our style is to make each child seem powerful, confident and strong. We often play around with shadows and colored gels in our lighting to create a more impactful image.



Lighting for impact doesn't necessarily mean you need to have the most expensive gear or several lights. Many of our most popular images were created with a simple one-light setup with a reflector. We use the main light on a softbox or octabox slightly above our model with the reflector below our subject for fill. If you have an additional light, we often use our Profoto B10+ light directly behind our subject, pointed at the backdrop with color gel. This allows us to change the background color without having to change out backdrops each time.

In terms of equipment, we use a Canon EOS R5 and almost always start with our Canon RF 28-70mm f/2 because it gives us the ability to capture a variety of angles without having to switch out our lens too much. When we want to get a few closer portraits we're typically using our Canon EF 85mm 1.8 and our Canon Control Ring Adapter Mount. It's important for us to keep our equipment simple because we know that we often only have a short period of time with our subjects before they get too tired.

When it comes to shooting, we always try to plan as much as possible to make the shoot run smoothly, but we leave lots of room for experimentation and just figuring some things out on set. For us, that's typically where the "magic" happens and usually the shots we like the most.



LET THE KIDS HAVE A SAY

One of the questions we receive most about photographing children is how we get the kids to hang in there with us through the shoot. One of the biggest tips we give is to let the kids have a say in the process. Don't worry about getting the perfect shot. Sometimes the mishaps and imperfections turn out to be our favorite photos. We are often negotiating with kids so that they feel like their voice is being heard. If they have a particular pose or idea they'd like to do, we ask them to let us get a few of our ideas in first, then they can do anything they want (within reason). Even if you don't end up using those photos, it makes it much easier to keep them engaged in the session.

We also recommend letting kids see themselves on camera during the process. One of our favorite things about our photo shoots is when kids see themselves on camera for the first time and they see a version of themselves they never thought was possible. It often gets them excited and sparks new ideas for them throughout the session.





GIVE THEM WINGS

Kids who are encouraged to embrace their dreams will have a more solid foundation of self-awareness and understanding. In a world where kids are constantly under pressure to measure up to society's standards, it's important for them to see themselves as powerful, confident, strong and beautiful.

Our hope is that through our art and lens, we can create an environment that fosters unlimited imagination and empowerment.



World renowned child photographers, Regis and Kahran Bethencourt, are a husband and wife duo and the imaginative forces behind CreativeSoul Photography. The pair gained global recognition with their AfroArt series. The collection, which showcases the beauty and versatility of afro hair, was conceived as a way to empower kids of color around the world. The couple recently authored their *New York Times* bestselling coffee table book, "Glory," which brings to life past, present and future visions of black culture. With more than 11 years of working with hundreds of children, families and brands, they specialize in child and lifestyle photography while incorporating authentic visual storytelling.

website: creativesoulphoto.com instagram: @creativesoulphoto

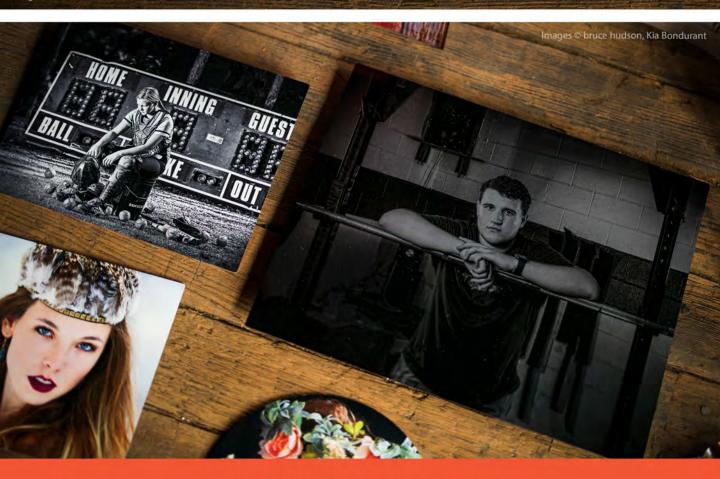




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3 CREATIVE IDEAS — FOR YOUR **MOTHERHOOD** PHOTOSHOOTS

with Donatella Nicolini



If you're a photographer and you've ever worked with babies, you know how challenging it can be! As a portrait photographer specialized in maternity portraits, my clients often desire another photoshoot after the pregnancy session to have beautiful portraits with their precious baby.

Personally, I'm not a huge fan of newborn photography, so I chose instead to focus on portraits of mothers and babies between the ages of 7 and 12 months.

This is an interesting time to portray babies as they start to reveal more of their permanent face features and future personality.

This is the time when babies start to gift us with the most beautiful smiles and the funniest facial expressions.

I always include some classic shots in the session and then I save some time for something more fun and creative, while remaining along the lines of a timeless and elegant style.

I begin to prepare for the creative shots a few weeks in advance, gathering ideas and creating a moodboard that I share with my assistant and makeup artist, so that we are all on the same page and up to date when the day of the photoshoot comes.

I also ask my clients during the pre-shooting consultation if they have ideas they want to share with me. If they find anything they like, they will send me photos for reference and I will start to create something from there.

It's not rare that I find myself needing to go shopping for props, flowers, clothes or other elements to bring to life a specific idea I have in mind, and this is why I recommend starting to prepare in advance.

Finding the right kind of dress, the right type of flower, the right color of backdrops, etc. is not always easy and fast. Trying to find everything last minute will cause you a lot of stress and possibly a great deal of disappointment too.

You might not get the results you were hoping for, having to settle for what you were able to find last minute.

I've been doing motherhood sessions for about four years now and I've tried many creative setups to wow my clients, so today I want to help you find the inspiration you need to start. I am sharing a few tips to create your own beautiful motherhood portraits.



Here are three ideas for your creative motherhood photoshoots.

1. LAYERING

We live in a three-dimensional world and we try to reproduce part of it in our images that are bi-dimensional instead.

Using layers in your image adds depth and makes them look more three-dimensional and interesting.

I love to use natural elements in my studio, such as flowers, leaves or dry grass, and position them at different distances between the subject and the camera so I get a more interesting depth of field, and I also get to frame my subjects beautifully.

You can clamp flowers, pampas, leaves (just to name a few) to your light stands and place them in different spots.



In this photo I even used a simple piece of tape to attach some pampas to the wall right behind my subjects. Then, I had a couple people holding more pampas in front of the camera to create that soft, out of focus effect that frames the image in a way that is not too invasive and doesn't take away too much attention from the mom and the baby at the center of the image.

Take a look at the color palette: everything is in harmony and the color of the pampas is as warm and soft as the color of the subjects' skin and hair. The dress we chose is white as well as the wall we used as background.

On the following page is another example using the same layering technique.

For this image I was inspired by the color palette used in the Netflix Series "Bridgerton."

In color analysis, this specific color palette belongs to the summer season and includes pastel colors with a cold undertone, such as the light blue and lilac in the flowers and the dress.

I found that studying color analysis has been extremely helpful for my photography work. I can now choose colors more wisely and with purpose, knowing in advance what color combinations will look good together and what colors will be flattering to my subject.





settings: f3.6 @ 1/125 iso 2000

2. USING FLOWERS INSTEAD OF CLOTHES

Another creative and stunning way to use flowers is to wrap them around mom's body.

Personal tip: look for flower garlands. It'll be much easier to put them in place and you won't have to use glue or any other tool to avoid flowers falling off the body.

Flowers add that feminine and delicate touch that I believe matches perfectly with motherhood.

To reinforce this idea of softness and delicacy I chose to go with an overall soft look using natural light coming from my studio windows, camera right.

Quick tip to catch baby's attention and make him/her look straight at the camera: Grab a toy that makes a sound and squeeze it just above the camera (or even better, ask your assistant to do that for you).

3. BREASTFEEDING AND NAPPING

It's very likely that at some point during the photoshoot, the baby will get hungry.

Bummer? Not really!

If the mom is breastfeeding, take advantage of these intimate, precious minutes to create the most memorable portraits.

Breastfeeding is a powerful moment that deserves to be photographed with respect and grace.

It can be tricky to portray breastfeeding with elegance, but when done right, the results are absolutely magnificent and your clients will completely fall in love with them.

Please keep in mind that not all moms breastfeed and it is a sensitive subject for many people, so be careful when bringing up the topic during or before the photoshoot. Don't push the mom into any situations she might not feel comfortable in.

This photo session is all about connection and emotions and it's our job to make our clients feel at ease and free to express themselves while bonding with their baby.

Never make your clients feel judged, especially about such private matters.





3 Creative Ideas For Your Motherhood Photoshoots | Donatella Nicolini

settings: f4.5 @ 1/200 iso 125

This is your chance to finally have the baby still and position him as you like in mom's arms.

I love to put the baby skin to skin with mom and wrap both of them together using a loose piece of fabric, like I did in this image.

When choosing fabrics that will go in contact with babies' skin, it's best to go for natural, organic fabrics like cotton and silk that won't cause irritations or make the baby too warm.

Synthetic fibers are less breathable and can cause the baby to feel hot and may also make the mom sweat.

Babies generally do not have a lot of patience on set, therefore it is extremely important to use every available moment and make the most out of it, including sleep and breastfeeding. It's up to us to make art out of it.

Plan ahead every lighting setup, every change of clothes, every detail so that you don't end up wasting time during the session. Don't lose the opportunity to take a good variety of portraits for your clients because the baby gets tired and stressed and doesn't want to collaborate anymore.

If the baby starts crying or seems unsettled, take a moment and try to understand what's going on and how you and the mom can meet his needs.

These are three ideas to help you unlock your creativity when working with babies. If you're already offering maternity sessions, you might want to consider adding motherhood photoshoots to your portfolio. I promise your clients will love it and so will you!



Donatella Nicolini is a photographer, speaker and specialized international educator known for her exclusive, luxurious and elegant maternity portraits that blend a fashion-forward style with fine art portraits, published and awarded worldwide. She also speaks at numerous international photography conferences and teaches courses for professionals from all over the world.

website: en.donatellanicolini.it instagram: @donatellanicolinistudio

NEWBORN Photography

6 TIPS FOR CHOOSING PROPS

with Ana Brandt





Newborn photography continues to grow each year, and with this growth brings props that can transform your sessions and creativity. I love finding new, unique props and my clients appreciate the many artistic ways I use them. I do my best to adjust the prop each time so not every image looks the same.

In my opinion, props require assistance. Props can be unstable, wobbly, uncertain, and quite often require a spotter very close by. It is impossible to spot a baby on a prop and capture an image with ease and certainty. I work with an assistant every day and I believe this is invaluable and necessary for my business.

Buying props that are the right size for newborns can be tricky. You want to make sure the prop is not too small or too big—it has to be just right.







settings: f2.8 @ 1/160 iso 200



settings: f3.2 @ 1/200 iso 200



settings: f2.8 @ 1/200 iso 200

TIP 1. CHECK THE LENGTH OF THE PROP TO MAKE SURE A BABY WILL FIT

You can see in the photos that one way to make sure a baby will fit is to curl up your hand and see if your arm fits wrist to elbow. Most babies are curled up when they are in a prop, and quite often a baby will measure the same as your arm.



settings: f3.2 @ 1/200 iso 250





settings: f2.8 @ 1/160 iso 160



TIP 2. CHECK THE DEPTH

Usually I like a good 4 to 5 inches deep for bowls so that you can curl babies inside as well as have posers underneath the baby for support.



TIP 3. SAFETY CHECK FOR SHARP EDGES

Run your fingers around the prop and make sure there are no sharp edges, nails or other objects that could hurt a baby. You don't want nails, wires or anything else sticking out of the prop. Always have a soft poser or support between the prop and the baby so they are not resting on hard surfaces.

TIP 4. MAKE SURE THE PROP IS STURDY

Will it support the weight of the baby? For example, when using buckets we place a 5-pound disc weight inside the bucket to make sure the weight won't knock the bucket over.



settings: f2.8 @ 1/250 iso 500



TIP 5. AVOID USING BREAKABLE OBJECTS SUCH AS GLASS

Glass can break or shatter, and you do not want to put a delicate baby in anything that can cause harm if broken.



TIP 6. HAVE A NEARBY ASSISTANT USE COMPOSITES WHEN NECESSARY

For example, our dreamcatcher is a composite. You can see in the images shown that we photograph baby in the dreamcatcher, then we hang the dreamcatcher on the branch.







settings: f2.8 @ 1/200 iso 200

settings: f2.8 @ 1/200 iso 200



Finally, when using props for the first time, it is suggested to test the prop with a weighted doll. We use StandInBaby dolls for testing safety in props and for education.

Remember, there is no prop worth risking the safety of a baby.



Ana Brandt is one of the most recognized maternity/newborn photographers in the world. Ana has been a Professional Photographer for 20 years and a global educator for over 12 years. She has trained in 32 countries and has taught well over 10,000 students in person and over 20,000 online. Ana Brandt has worked with celebrities such as Alicia Silverstone, Sarah Drew, Edyta Sliwinska, Ian Ziering, Jessica Rey, Adrian Young, Sienna Guillory, Eddie Guardado, Kobe Bryant and many others. website: anabrandt.com instagram: @anabrandt



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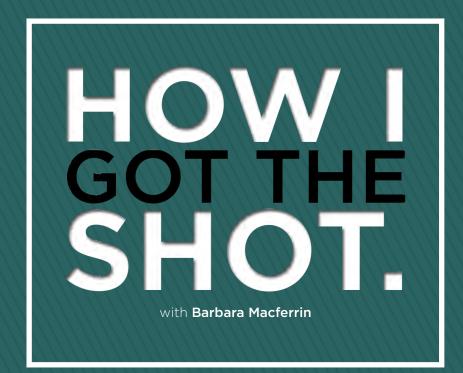




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◎★★★★★ BCM_8533.NEF I love creating fine art portraiture. For better or worse, I don't usually visualize a final portrait ahead of time, or have an exact idea of what I want to create. Most of the magic just happens in the moment as I'm shooting, then I make the image come to life in Photoshop. I'm inspired by the paintings of the Old Masters, and I always wished I could paint like they did. But since I am not that talented of a painter, the next best thing is to "paint" in Photoshop.

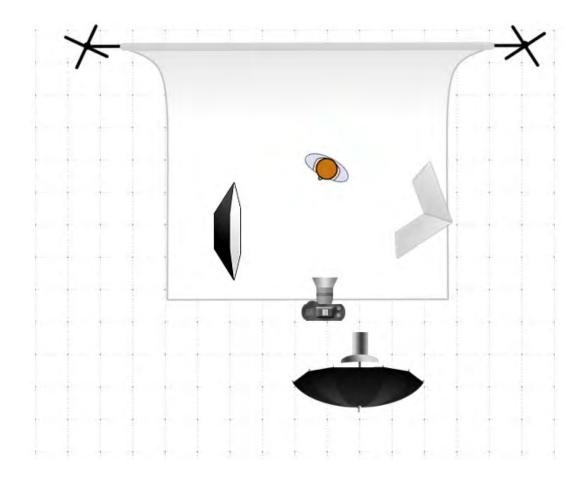
This image was taken during one of my fine art workshops. I wanted to create visual interest with the color of the green dress complementing Alex's red hair, then bringing the color red again into the books that were in her lap.



PREPARATION

I hired my hair/makeup artist, Theresa, to create a nice sweep with a side braid and a bun. The only makeup applied was mascara to bring out her lashes and some clear lip gloss. The dress is made by Trish Scully—a jewel-green color with a delicate floral embroidered pattern throughout. I chose this dress to complement her red hair and fair complexion.





THE SHOOT - EQUIPMENT

You don't need the best and most expensive equipment on the market to create great photography!

Here is a list of the gear I used:

Camera: Nikon D750

Lens: 50mm Nikkor f/1.8

Lights: Flashpoint Xplor AD600 x 2

Modifiers/Reflector:

- Glow EZ Lock 60" Octa (double diffused)
- 7' Westcott Parabolic umbrella with white diffusion sock (white interior)
- White V-flat

For the shot, I used the 60" octa as my main light on camera left and feathered it to create soft light without any hotspots. The 7' parabolic umbrella was placed behind me slightly to the right to provide a subtle fill light to soften the shadows. I also used a white V-flat on camera right to bounce the light coming from the main octa, as you can see in the lighting diagram above. If the studio space had white walls nearby opposite the main light, I would not need the V-flat for bounce. Adjust your lights based on your shooting space.

CULLING

I chose image #8533 from this collection because I felt like her expression was the most intense along with her head facing the camera straight on. Culling and selecting that "perfect" image takes practice and really is a selective process. Choosing the image that feels right for me may not be the same image someone else would have chosen. I trust my gut during this process.



SOOC IMAGE (STRAIGHT OUT OF CAMERA)

As you can see, the SOOC image is lit very softly with a subtle shadow on her right side and I prefer a slightly underexposed image to start with. This allows for the most dynamic range in the final image after I perform my post processing, and it's what works the best for my editing workflow.

Settings for this shot:

- 50mm at f/2.8
- Shutter speed: 1/200
- ISO100

For fine art portraits I often shoot at a low aperture for a shallower depth of field and softer overall look.



POST PROCESSING

1. CLEANUP, SKIN RETOUCH AND INITIAL DODGE AND BURN

I start my process by cleaning up blemishes, flyaway hair and evening out skin tones. I also did an initial dodge and burn process. You can see there is more depth in the shadows and more pronounced highlights than in the original SOOC image.





Image © Barbara MacFerrin Photography

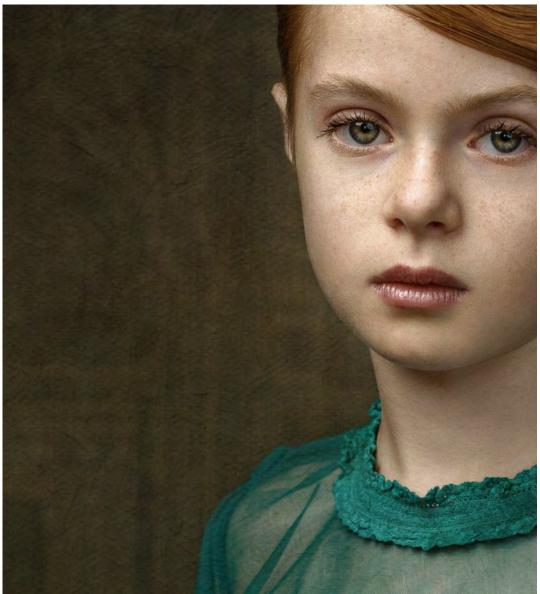
2. COMPOSITING

I don't do a lot of heavy compositing in my work—mainly because I don't have the patience and I'm not very good at it! But I do like to composite small elements to enhance an image. In this case, I loved her hair bun, but it was further back on her head and not visible in the shot I selected. I decided to composite the bun from another image to the side of her head so it would be visible. The image also seemed a bit bottom heavy, so I felt that adding the side bun would add balance to the overall photograph.

3. BACKGROUND

I wanted to add interest to the background, so I found a public domain image of an old library titled: Twickenham Library at Strawberry Hill by Jean Godefroy, 1784. I overlaid the image at a low opacity and masked out my subject. Background overlays are great for adding interest to your images—just make sure you are sourcing them from a public domain. Note that if you are entering images for competition, read the submission rules carefully as most organizations do not allow elements in your final image that were not originally photographed by you.





4. ADDING TEXTURES

I love to add textures to my fine art images—they add depth and that "painted" look to them. There are many ways to source textures. Sometimes you can find free ones online, you can make your own, or you can purchase them. I usually experiment with different ones until I am happy with the result. In this close-up detail image, you can see the texture that was added.



5. THE FINAL IMAGE

Finally, I gently color toned the image using a combination of Exposure Software X6 and color balance. I also increased exposure and contrast optimized for uploading to social media.

I enjoy editing just as much as I do shooting, if not more. If my image makes you ask whether it's a photograph or a painting, then I know I've accomplished my goal.



Barbara MacFerrin is an award winning fine art portrait photographer based in Boulder, Colorado. Inspired by Old Master paintings of the Baroque period, she captures unique portraits to display in timeless, fine art pieces. Barbara is a 2021 PPA Diamond Photographer of the Year and an Accredited Master Photographer of The Portrait Masters. Her work has been internationally published and she teaches online and in-person Fine Art Photography workshops to photographers all around the world.

website: barbaramacferrinphotography.com instagram: @barbaramacferrin



INSPIRATIONS

Inspiration can come when you least expect it. As photographers, we are visual artists. We express ourselves through our camera and the images we create. Inspirations represents a sampling of our industry and the vision of professional photographers from around the world.

Congratulations to all our featured artists. Be inspired and create something that is you.

Sal Cincotta, Publisher



Inspirations | Our Readers

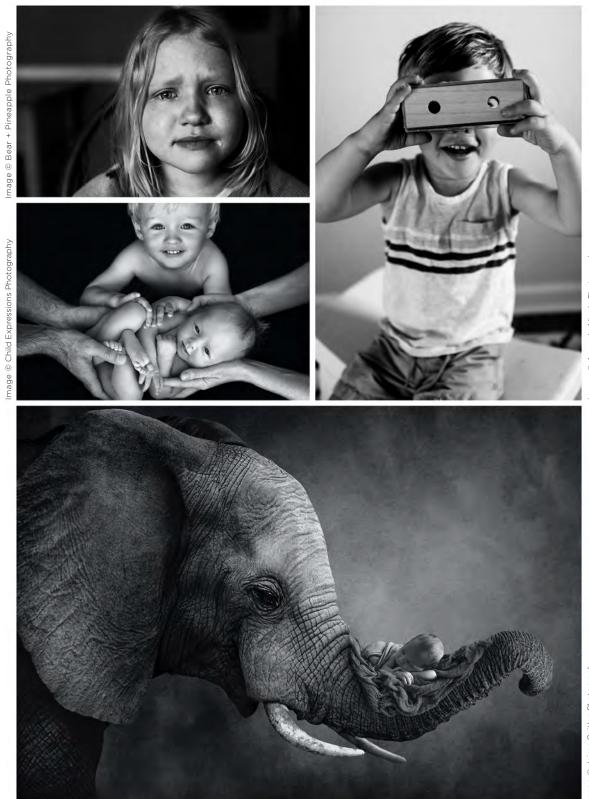


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2.6

Image © Tanja Rachelle Photography

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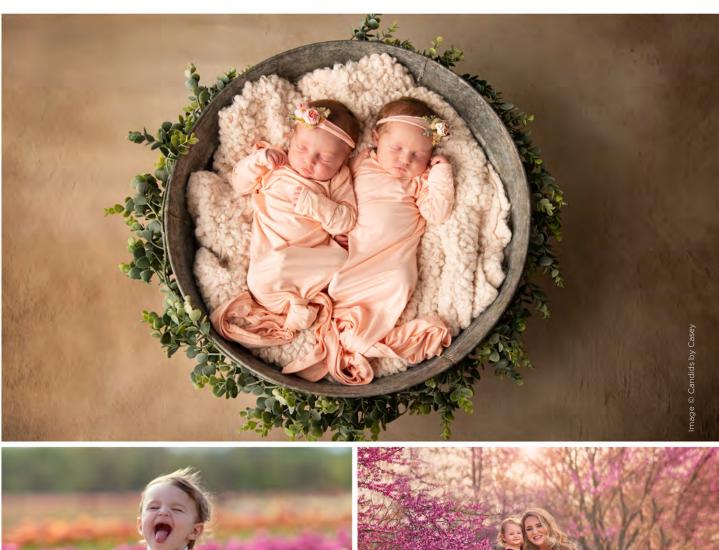
Image © Kate Mitchem Photography



Image © Candids by Casey











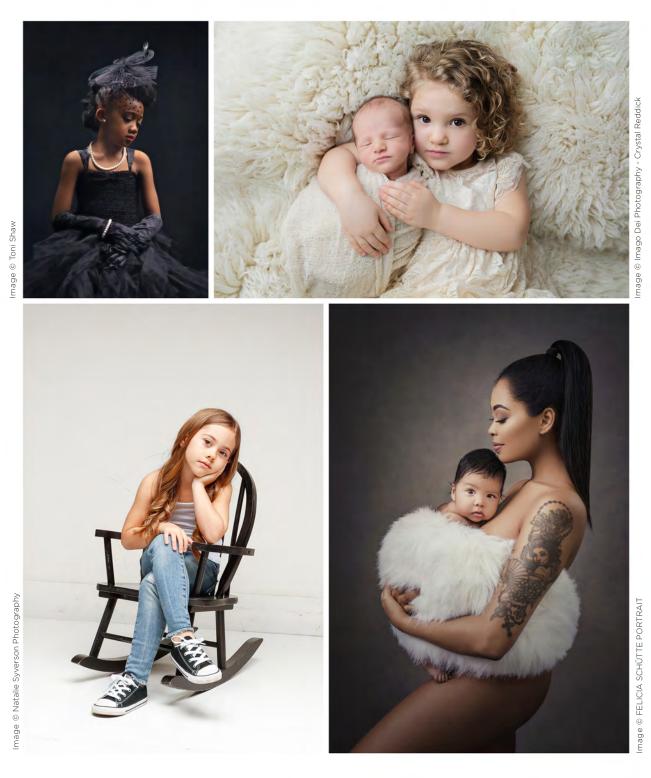














Image © Estelle Marie Photography

Image © Laura Tye Photography



Image © Short Photography







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INSPIRATION **NOT IMITATION**

CREATING YOUR OWN ART WORK

with Karen Bagley

As artists, we get our inspiration from literally everywhere. As creatives, our minds are constantly running, and we often—no, most times—can picture beauty in a scene where others cannot. Creatives as a whole are the most unique beings on the planet because we look at things through eyes no one can even understand until we share it with them.

Being a creative comes with its cons as well. We get so wrapped up in the hustle mindset to make money that we forget to do what we originally signed up to do... CREATE. Before we know it, we find ourselves endlessly scrolling through social media, one in particular—yes, the dreaded Pinterest—looking for "inspiration." Somewhere along the way inspiration has been confused and is becoming IMITATION. The difference, you ask? One is something you have seen in your mind that you bring to life. The other one you have is—well, let's call it what it is—a copy or imitation. Something you have seen from an outside source that you literally imitate.



settings: f2.8 @ 1/100 iso 100

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Image © Significant Moments Photography





Now please understand we have all had "that" client who has seen something somewhere and asked us to repeat it. So, what do we do… We copy it. Make the client happy, right? Short answer, yes. Long answer, NO!

We have all been guilty of this, myself included. Not only is this further disconnecting us from our creative minds, but we are losing bigger sales because clients want what they see... It's all they know. What if though, you give them something they have never seen? IMAGINE YOUR SALES THEN! And the ability to reach clients who truly value what's in that beautiful mind of yours. At what point are we just copying other artists' work and at what point do we get back in touch with our true creative self?

Well, I am here to help. We tend to put our minds in a creative box, if you will, for multiple reasons. The biggest of which is: Nobody has done this before, so is it really possible that I could possibly do it? Our confidence is shaken so we stick with what we know. Or what we see other photographers supposedly making money with. So, the reasoning part of our brain says "stick with that." I mean, we already hear it enough that our career isn't even a career to begin with, so we already feel shaky in ourselves right out of the gate. To that I say a loud "SCREW THAT!" We didn't become photographers to create the same exact thing as everyone else. We chose this career to show everyone the beauty we see in our own way, what's in our own mind.

Change is in the air and step one to that change is to stop looking to everyone else. PLEASE for the love of all things STAY OFF PINTEREST. I swear Pinterest is a rabbit hole of the same things that a billion other photographers have done. But it's not just there, it's on all social media. So, take one HUGE step back from looking at others' work. Instead, go outside, go visit a museum, go to an antique store and look for older fashion magazines. Go to your happy place. (All of you who know me know that that is the ocean for me. My biggest creative ideas come when I just hear the water.) Take time to push everything out and focus on you and how YOU see the world, the people, interactions between people. What does your creative mind see? What do you see beauty in? What do you not see beauty in? Can you change it to make it beautiful? If so, how?



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Now that we have gotten back to our center, how do we handle the clients who come in with their inspiration images asking for that image, all the while this article is ringing in your head with dread? Now let me be clear, I love when clients have inspiration. It gives YOU insight into who they are and that is another big piece to the puzzle in racking up sales. BECAUSE you understand their mind better. However, the best way to handle that situation is to specifically say, "I love that you have inspiration, that's perfect. But, understand I never copy another artists' work, so we will make it our own." It works every time. Yes, feel free to use that exact sentence. It's not copyrighted. HA! Now, here you find yourself with inspiration trying to figure out how to make it yours. That's where the real fun begins. This is where you look at that inspiration once and never look at it again. Now is the time for you to connect with your own creative mind and switch it up. Could you find a better location? Could you take a dry gown or silk and make it wet? Could you crinkle seamless paper to add texture? Could you layer backdrops for multiple colors and textures? Or even something simpler like changing poses? Or even your lighting positioning?



settings: f10 @ 1/125 iso 200

Image © Significant Moments Photography







The truth is this: I've heard my entire career that maternity and underwater portraiture is a fad and will die any moment. Might I add, even in a pandemic, we doubled business again... Hitting an entirely new tax bracket. Why? Because I think outside the box. I don't want to be an imitator. I genuinely don't think any of us do.

I know what you're thinking... "Karen, it's impossible to change things all the time. It just is." And I would say back to you, "That thinking is what will slowly drag you down and smother your business." There was once a time people didn't even think maternity portraiture could ever be a money-making field. There was a time putting someone in water to take their picture was unheard of. There was a time that double exposure images had not been thought of. There was a time going to outer space was the most unrealistic thought ever, or an electric car... You see where I'm headed with this. There is plenty that has been undiscovered, but we are so blinded paying more attention to others because they quote "make money" so we need to do what they do. That thinking is sinking us.



We also get so busy sometimes the sessions start getting repetitive. Everything just blurs together and seems the same all the time, which is why it is so important to shoot just for yourself and your mind—at least twice a year. UNLEASH THE CREATIVE BEAST! It's there! Your mind is a beautiful, magnificent, strong tool. And I know every single one of us has the ability to make our OWN artwork. So, take that deep breath. Take a deep look inward and let your mind start an entirely new view on whatever field you photograph. You are unique, your art is unique. Let your clients see that part of you.

It's time to get and be inspired, but make it your own!



Karen Bagley is an energetic Fine Art Maternity, Motherhood, and Underwater Portrait Photographer and international speaker based in Atlanta, Georgia. Known for her dramatic and powerful maternity portraits, she is one of the most sought-after maternity photographers in the world. Karen opened Significant Moments Photography seven years ago and has since grown to a thriving six-figure business with her maternity clientele alone. She is on a mission to change what people think of when they hear maternity portraiture, one client and photographer at a time.

website: significantmomentsphotography.com instagram: @significant_moments

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POST-PRODUCTION BEST PRACTICES FOR

PRINTED ARTWORK

with Holly Lund



Whether you are printing your photography for yourself, for clients, for galleries, or for any other purpose, there is a lot to keep in mind. The paper or product and the size and manner in which it will be displayed all play heavily into creating a final piece of artwork.

Similarly, how you take your images through post-processing matters greatly.

I'm going to be honest here—I won't claim to be an expert about all things photography printing.

"Great opening there, Holly. So, uh, why are you telling us about this then?"

Fair question, dear reader! I wanted to share my insight because I know so many photographers are intimidated by printing, what goes into it, and all of the options available. Printing my art was important to me, so I dove in head first without fear. That means you get to reap the benefits of my experiences and what I have learned along the way.

One of the things that I don't take into consideration and usually tops the list of every other article that discusses printing is screen calibration.

I can hear the gasps already.

Look, I'm not against calibrating. I've just never done it. My colors have been spot on with my chosen vendors, and if it ain't broke, don't fix it. (Really, the owner of one of said labs actually used that phrase with me after confirming my images looked perfect.) It would be disingenuous for me to tell you to do that and why it's important when I have never done it myself. Had my results been different, it is absolutely something I would look into.

Now, with that out of the way...



settings: f7.1 @ 1/100 iso 200

Image © Holly Lund Imagery



DECIDING HOW YOUR IMAGES WILL BE PRINTED

Before we get into what you need to keep in mind during your editing workflow, you must first decide what you want your end result to be. Knowing your desired outcome is going to help you reverse engineer the steps you need to take in order to achieve quality printed artwork.

Will you be printing the images yourself, or will you partner with a professional photography lab?

I have chosen to work with two professional labs, but the following will also apply to printing yourself. The added bonuses to doing your own printing are more control, quicker turnaround, and there's less of a time and financial hassle if you make an error. Working with a lab gives you the benefit of their years of expertise, as well as access to products that you are unable to print yourself, such as canvas, acrylics and metals.

The products you choose to print on will also impact the results you achieve. Some papers absorb inks more than others. One paper may be cool toned while another has a warm base. Certain papers are exceptional for black and white photography, and others are just okay. Textures not only give variation in how your artwork feels, but how it looks. You can get away with lack of sharpness more on canvas and not at all on metal. Your lab or paper supplier should be able to give you all of this insight to help you make informed decisions in your product selection and post-production.

THE TECHNICAL SIDE OF POST-PRODUCTION

If you are new to printing, terms like color space, ICC profiles, and soft proofing are enough to make your head spin, but understanding their purpose is key to achieving stellar printed artwork.

A color space is the gamut of the colors that are visible. The sRGB color space is a narrow gamut. However, it is frequently used for its consistency and it's what is used on the internet. (Quick tip: Images shared online should be exported as sRGB!) A high percentage of labs use printers that are capable of printing images that are exported in the sRGB color space. Adobe RGB has a wider gamut of available colors; if a lab specifies that their printers read Adobe RGB, be sure to export in that color space to take advantage of its benefit. Lastly, you may have heard of ProPhoto RGB. This is currently the largest gamut of colors and arguably includes colors we cannot even see!

Personally, I have my camera body set to shoot in Adobe RGB. I then edit my image in Adobe RGB and will export as sRGB when appropriate. One of my labs prints Adobe RGB and the other prints sRGB. I just have to remember to slow down and ensure I'm ticking off the right boxes during my exporting process.

Some printers require that you also pay attention to 8 bit or 16 bit. This refers to the amount of tones available for each color. Without throwing mathematical equations at you, 8 bit means you will have 256 tones per color, and 16 bit equals 65,536 tones.

I knew that alone was enough to blow your mind.

16-bit files are going to be larger, and that doesn't always mean better. If you are printing at home, your printer's user guide should outline whether you should be in 8 bit or 16 bit. If your lab's instructions don't specify, reach out and ask!

ICC printer profiles allow you to soft proof your image in Lightroom or Photoshop. To the best of their ability, they simulate how your image will appear from that printer's output on certain papers. This will help you in making any final adjustments regarding luminance as well as color.





Image © Holly Lund Imagery



Image © Holly Lund Imagery

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND WHILE EDITING

If absolutely nothing else, the thing that should be at the front of your mind during post-processing is that you are working on a backlit device and your prints are not backlit. Our computer screens and mobile devices create their own light. What we see in print is the reflection of light. The luminosity of the colors you are working with on your screen simply will not be replicated exactly in print. It is important to have realistic expectations.

The other feedback I frequently hear from photographers is how dark their prints come back to them. This is also related to created versus reflected light. A good rule of thumb is to edit your images at 50% brightness, but your lab can also provide guidance on what might work best for what they offer.

You can improve your screen visibility at a lower brightness if you limit your ambient light. I typically edit in a completely dark or nearly dark room. If that's not your jam, you should always be editing your images with the same amount of ambient light. That will give your images—both digital and printed—consistency.



settings: f2.0 @ 1/400 iso 400



settings: f2.0 @ 1/400 iso 400

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FINALIZING YOUR FILES

You've finished editing your image and you're happy with your soft proofing. What's next?

If working with a vendor, check, double-check, and then triple-check the submission guidelines for your lab. Truly, it is a bummer and a half realizing you sent them an image not exported correctly.

Aspects you undoubtedly want to make sure are correct are:

- · Aspect ratio and any bleed area necessary for specific products
- Resize and any interpolation required for large scale prints
- DPI
- Color space
- File extension

A quick aside: you may be asking, "What's the difference between DPI and PPI?" DPI is dots per inch and PPI is pixels per inch. Dots are used in printing, and pixels are used for digital resolutions. As you can see in the Lightroom export screen, the field says PPI, but this is the same field for DPI.

One last thing before you upload and submit. Zoom in closely and review every little detail of your image, especially if you have done extensive editing in Photoshop. Check to make sure any masking hasn't colored outside the lines, your retouching is clean, and everything else is in tip-top shape. Once you're satisfied, get your artwork printed!

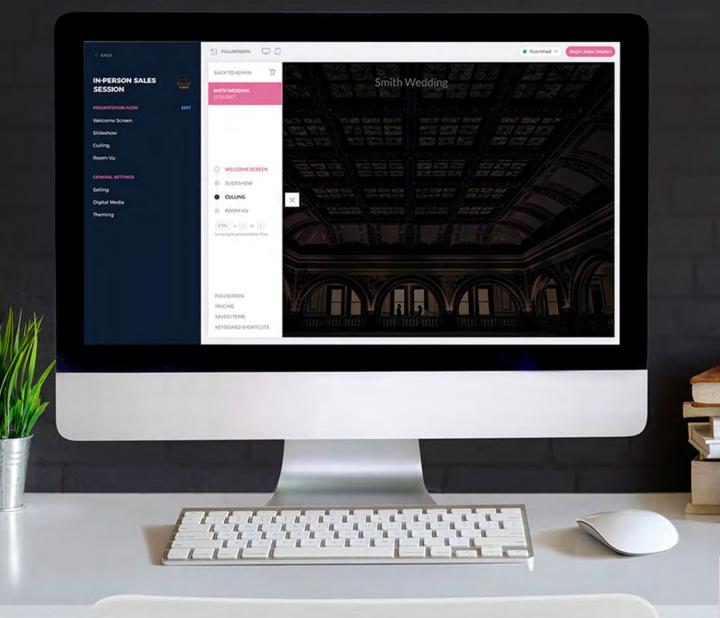


Holly Lund is a children's fine art portrait and headshot photographer based out of Monmouth County, New Jersey. In addition to offering her own products and mentoring services, she is a Resident Instructor with Summerana Academy, a Contributor with Finding Magic, and a workshop instructor with Tours by Stella Maris. Holly is also a proud member of the National Association of Professional Child Photographers.

website: hollylundimagery.com instagram: @hollylundimagery



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CLIENT GALLERIES					
COMMISSION	12%*	9%*	9%*	9%*	0%*
SIGNUP PRODUCT CREDITS	\$0	\$0	\$200	\$200	\$200
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IPS GALLERIES	-				
IPS VIDEO CALLS	0	0	0	30	100
MOBILE APPS	Pay as you go	Pay as you go	Pay as you go	Unlimited	Unlimited
RE-VU	9.0				
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STAYING competitive IN A SATURATED MARKET

with Rob Adams



In more than 24 years of providing wedding videography services to the greater New York City market and being married to successful wedding photographer, Vanessa Joy, for nearly 12 of them, I've had to adapt my business model more than I'd like to admit. Pricing models that once netted big profits no longer work. Where I once offered large budget wedding cinematography packages out-of-the-gate, these offerings are now replaced with lower initial price tags and then are followed up with backend-heavy up-sells meant to entice couples to choose my company over other bloated but lesser-priced options. Admittedly, I fully understand that this is the nature of business everyplace and things rarely stay the same.

In the case of the wedding industry, especially in the imaging department there has been a radical evolution over the last five to eight years that has forced much of the old guard, the established businesses, to rethink their strategies. As the wedding photography and videography market becomes ever more saturated, resting on your proverbial haunches can quickly lead to being eclipsed by young up-and-coming artists who may not yet understand profit models but can produce stellar work that is attractive and inexpensive to today's brides.

Staying relevant with a sound and established business structure is getting harder and harder. Newcomers who see dollar signs at being able to charge more than their part-time college job, coupled with the enticement of being their own boss, is enabling massive under-cutting for a service that established business owners have come to learn is not so easy to do. What am I trying to say here is this: More and more young photographers and videographers are bursting onto the scene and not charging what their work is actually worth, and it hurts everyone who has been around the game for some time.

The barrier to entry for new wedding photographers and videographers has never been so thin. Equipment is cheaper. Editing services and labor are more available and also more affordable. More and more engaged couples are able to leverage this by getting good work for a very cheap price. The downside of this—moreso for the newcomer and not the established business owner—is that sooner or later, the newcomer realizes that their cheap business model isn't sustainable. It may be because they realize how small their profit margins actually are and that they aren't earning much more than your average fast-food worker's hourly wage. Or, they simply burn out by taking on too much work too fast for too little money. But after some time they all come to realize (hopefully) that they want a life and not a business that rules it.

Regardless of why this is happening, this history-repeating trend is a blight on the wedding imaging world. It ripples upward and thereby impacts the bottom-lines and hard-earned financial health of established photographers and videographers who may be operating on a sound business model, but are now left struggling to compete among a flood of new operators in the imaging space.

The key to staying relevant and operational in such a time—at least what has worked for me—is adaptivity with a hint of subterfuge. I'll break it down for you.



ADAPTIVITY

When your market is saturated, the first thing you realize is that unless you adapt your pricing structure, bookings may drop off for you, or they already have. This can be very disheartening. This of course depends on where your current pricing lives on the hierarchy of the pricing tier. If you're at the top-of-the-market or higher-than-average range of photo/video pricing you might be finding yourself falling short of your target numbers because brides are opting for cheaper options. If this is the case, you have some homework to do. You need to research who's charging what for similar work and either match it or make your value stand out somehow. If you recognize that the problem can't be explained by the normal ebbs and flows of leads and conversions, you may find this to be an important "mirror moment." It's the moment you recognize that couples are not booking you, not because of the quality of your work, but because they can find your quality of work for less. Scary stuff, I know. It's happened to me numerous times through the years as hungry, highly-skilled videographers with terrible business sense are cutting the knees off of a business that used to command a very respectable price for quality wedding cinematography.



SUBTERFUGE

This is not meant to be deceptive by any means. An act of subterfuge simply means to obscure attention or divert attention away from something. This has been my primary method for encouraging new bookings among ever-increasing competition while still getting very close to my desired price tag for my services. It's a simple shift in how packages and offerings are presented. This method requires a bit more work and possibly even more meetings than historically needed to service my clients but it keeps me in the game.

When I finally accepted that I would have to change my pricing structure and what I offer my clients to keep pace with changing dynamics, it took some inventive thinking. No longer would I be able to front-load introductory packages with tons of options and a high price tag. I had to trim down offerings in my base collections and cut services to account for the more competitive pricing. To counteract this I simply created pre- and post-wedding up-sells that are presented to the newly booked client at strategic times.

For example, a base package that once included 12 hours of coverage, an 8-minute creative film, full edits of the ceremony and reception, a teaser trailer, 4K delivery, drone footage and raw footage now only included 10 hours of coverage, a 5-minute film and drone footage with the longer film option. 4K and raw footage would now be offered as add-ons both before and after the wedding. Once the client locked me in for the base collection, I then had multiple opportunities to sell them the additional items without losing them to a competitor who gave away the farm for a cheaper price. At timed intervals both before and after the wedding I offer discounted combination packages plus a-la-carte add-on items to raise the overall client investment to what they would've spent on a similar package before. It works pretty darn good with each of the clients who booked at a lower price up front, adding on an average of \$1,600 in add-on items when it was all said and done.

This method does require creatively timed use of automated emails using my client management system. I use 17hats to set up email drip campaigns that present these options to the client periodically from the time they book all the way through to after the wedding where we do a separate Zoom meeting to discuss their final chance to extend the length of their creative film and add on other items at a discount. It really works well. We also have a Zoom meeting prior to the wedding to go over the itinerary of the day, but this also presents me with a chance to give them upgrade options while anticipation for the wedding is still high. After the wedding, when I show them a little teaser video of the wedding day I'm able to convert up-sells with an 80% success rate! It's keeping my bottom-line consistent with where it was before I saw a drop off in lead conversions because of market saturation.

Still, the problem remains that too many new wedding photographers and videographers know too little about business to charge what their product is intrinsically worth. Once they realize their profits aren't enough to cover the cost of doing regular, solid business they will likely find themselves looking to the strategy I've prescribed here as a remedy.





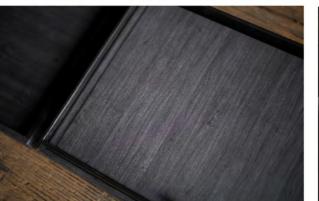
Rob Adams is a veteran wedding filmmaker and educator. During his 22 years filming weddings he has helped to define modern wedding storytelling with his blending of visuals and spoken dialogue. He has been a frequent contributor to *Shutter Magazine* and has spoken at various photo and video conferences around the globe.

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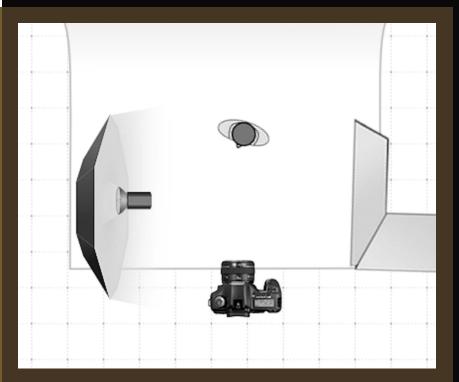


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