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june 2017

shutter

magazine

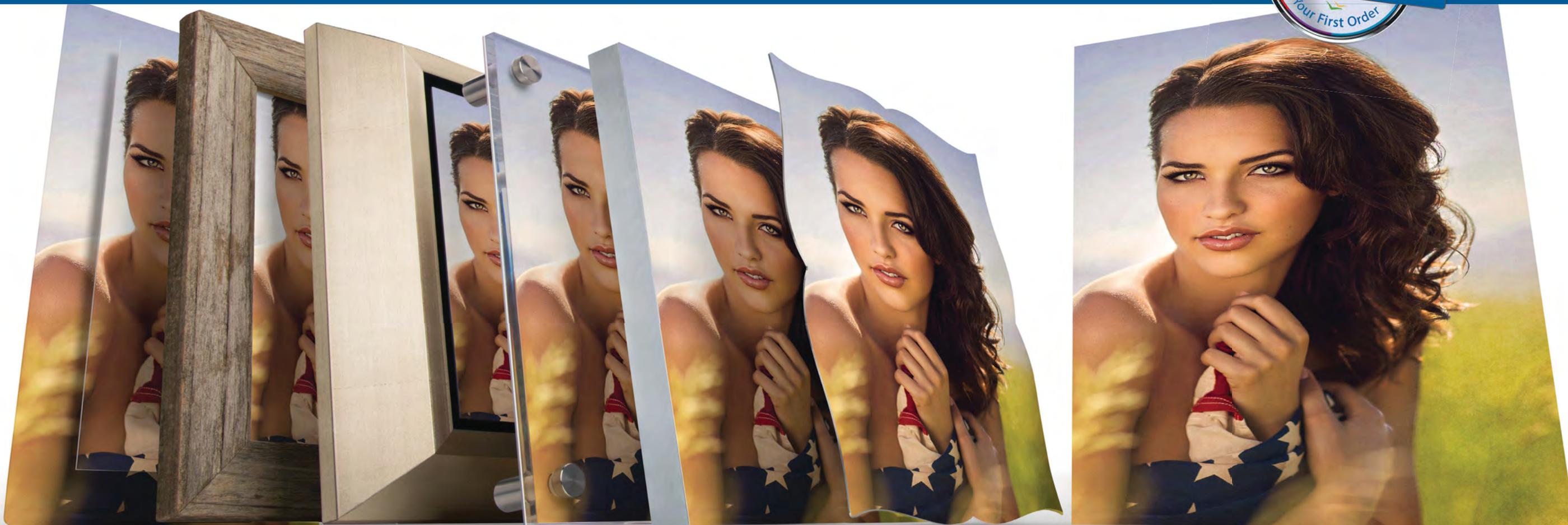


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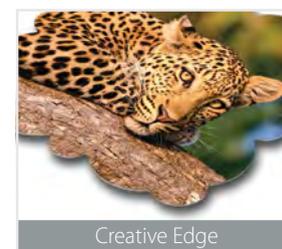
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- 12 | How I Got the Gig - Moshe Zusman
- 22 | Establishing Goals - Sal Cincotta
- 32 | Make Your Photography More Accessible With Lightroom CC and LR Photo - Dustin Lucas
- 50 | Transitional Newborn Posing - Ana Brandt
- 62 | 3 Wardrobe Hacks to Take Maternity From Mundane to Magnificent - Casey Dittmer
- 74 | Capturing the Light Inside: Photographing Medically Fragile Children - Sweet Nectar Society
- 86 | Higher-Profit, Lower-Stress Newborn Niche - Eileen Blume
- 98 | Creating Fantastical Worlds for Your Clients - Laura Schumpert
- 110 | How to Make Money With Maternity Portraits - Karen Bagley
- 124 | Newborn Photography: Starting From Scratch - Lisa Rapp
- 134 | Inspirations - Our Readers
- 166 | ON1 Photo RAW: A New Kind of RAW Processor - Michael Anthony
- 176 | What to Do When You Fall Behind in Your Business - Vanessa Joy
- 186 | One-Light Magic - Michael Corsentino
- 200 | Building Blocks: The First Steps to Building Your Business - Skip Cohen



176



186



124



110



12



50



62



74



98



86

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Salvatore Cincotta
BEHIND THE SHUTTER

MISSION STATEMENT

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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THE COVER

PHOTOGRAPHER: Laura Schumpert | lauramaephotos.com

CAMERA: Background: Canon 5D Mark III | Model: Canon 5D Mark IV

LENS: Background: 70-200mm @ 200mm | Model: 24-70mm @ 40mm

EXPOSURE: Background: f2.8 @ 1/1600, ISO 125

LOCATION: Background: Cliffs of Moher, Ireland | Model: In-Studio

ABOUT THE IMAGE: The background was taken in Ireland in 2016, the model was shot in studio in 2017 and the two were composited together to create the final look. For more behind the scenes images, see page 105.

LAUNCH POINT

A message from the editor-in-chief



*Parents love their kids.
Do you have a plan to document this
ever-growing demographic?*

- Sal Cincotta



Image © Laura Schumpert



Image © Moshe Zusman

HOW I GOT THE GIG

with Moshe Zusman



Image © Moshe Zusman

Just a few weeks ago, I photographed 20 Miss D.C. America contestants in my studio—all in one day. Not a bad way to make \$4,000 in a few hours with the most minimal overhead. Wondering how I managed to get that gig? Here's how it all began.

I have to start with my first encounter with pageant photography a few years ago. I was still a wedding/event photographer at the time. I had experience in portraits and fashion, but they weren't my forte. When I did a fashion shoot for a bridal designer in my brand-new studio, I befriended one of her models, a freshly titled pageant girl and a former Miss Maryland USA who was a Top 5 at Miss USA. I started photographing her more and more, and asked her to bring her sash and crown so I could practice. She introduced me to her pageants friends, who allowed me to photograph them as well. I enjoyed working with them.

I was able to advertise my pageant photography with the new photos I had taken. With my reputation as a portrait photographer, it wasn't hard to get noticed in Washington as a pageant photographer. I made connections through corporate clients of mine, like the director of the Miss D.C. (of Miss America) organization. Thanks to these relationships, I was given the opportunity to photograph the newly titled Miss D.C. for 2015, but without pay. The organization was looking to replace its old photographer, and liked my work and style.

I don't work for free unless I see value in it. There was value in this shoot because I'd be adding a beauty queen to my portfolio, and I was developing a relationship with the organization.

I kept practicing with my current clients, pageant girls, former and current titleholders, taking criticism and notes as I worked. I partnered with an amazing pageant-affiliated judge chair who coached me as I honed "the Moshe look."



Images © Moshe Zusman

At that point, I was still developing my style by looking at the work of the top pageant photographers in the country, like Joe Kelly and Fadil Berisha. “It’s a Fadil photo,” I kept hearing from pageant girls. I still get the “It’s a Moshe” when people see my wedding photos and headshots; when starting out in pageant photography, I wanted to get to the point where I’d get the same comments for that style.

A year later, in 2016, the Miss D.C. organization asked me to be the official photographer for all its contestants, not just the new titled girl. I agreed to do it for a special fee for each girl. They were committed to use me as their exclusive photographer for contestant headshot submissions. I set up a special payment and information page on my website that was sent to the contestants by the organization so they could pay online before their photo shoot. By the time of the shoot, I was paid in full.



Images © Moshe Zusman



Image © Moshe Zusman

I created a perfect clamshell lighting setup that worked well for all the girls, with minimal changes needed to account for different heights and skin tones, which made the shoot smooth and quick. I had a great makeup artist and a stylist. With my quick tethered workflow, each girl proofed and picked her image on the spot. I photographed 20 girls in less than eight hours in my studio. It took less than five minutes to shoot each girl, and then two to three more minutes for proofing and selection of the final image.

For the post-production workflow, I exported all 20 final images to my retoucher. We delivered the images to the pageant director, who distributed them to the girls.



Image © Moshe Zusman

We had a ton of fun creating beautiful images, and I made some good money that day and gained 20 new clients. We asked the girls to use only the watermarked version of their image on social media, and to provide a photo credit and a mention. Those 20 new clients were now my 20 new PR agents.

Every year, I set up the same photo shoot for the Miss D.C. contestants, and get to photograph the official winner a few days after the pageant for press releases. As always, the agreement includes full photo credit and mentions on all image uses.

Check out the video to see a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the shoot. ■

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Moshe Zusman is recognized for his innovative, bold use of light and color with a distinctly modern edge. The Washington, D.C.-based Moshe has been shooting for more than a decade, and specializes in weddings, portraits, headshots and events. He has been featured at numerous workshops and conferences, including WPPI, PhotoPlus Expo, ImagingUSA and ShutterFest, and also hosts his own workshops at his D.C. studio.

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ESTABLISHING GOALS

with Sal Cincotta

One challenge I often see when working with newer photographers is a lack of planning. I describe it as defining your “flags.” Where are you going? Where do you intend to plant your next flag? What does success look like for you and your studio? Many business owners don’t know the answer to this simple question. Where you are heading with your business or career, with your life? So many of us struggle with this, and it’s a very important question for you. I find myself asking it all the time. Oddly enough, the answer changes month by month, year by year.

The changing of your flags is to be expected. Life changes. Your business changes. You should be ready to adapt accordingly. It’s no different than a general on a battlefield changing the mission and tactics based on new information.

So, how do we plan accordingly?

ASK YOURSELF: WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

This is not easy to answer, which is all the more reason it needs to be asked. If you don't know what success looks like, you are wasting time and energy doing things that may or may not lead you down the right path. It's like walking around in a dark room looking for a light switch. Maybe you will find it, maybe you won't.

Success is not predefined, nor is it necessarily a final destination. Success for me has been a moving target most of my career. That's okay. I am constantly adjusting and moving (more about that a little later). So, to that point, what does success look like for you at this moment?

No one can tell you what success is for you. We all have different measuring sticks. We all have different life goals. We all have different pressures on us.

Is your success tied to financials? Is it defined by independence? Is it determined by a skill level?

Think about what you want out of life and your career. At one point in my career, I defined success as quitting my corporate job and pursuing a career as a professional photographer. Once I achieved that goal, I had to adjust my definition of success. My next goal was a financial one. At first, it was to have an average of five shoots per week. Next, I adjusted my goal to having my first six-figure sales month. Once that was achieved, my goals moved yet again, and changed to crossing the million-dollar mark in gross sales for my studio.

Your goals have to start as reasonable ones and build from there. If your goal is to become the next million-dollar studio but you are not working full-time as a photographer, you can see how it might be an impossible one to achieve, and that can be deflating.

Start with small achievable goals. Success becomes a habit. With each mini-win, you get closer and closer to your larger goals.

WRITE DOWN YOUR GOALS.

I have found that having goals without writing them down is useless. I write them on sticky notes and put them on my mirror and laptop. This forces me to stare at them every single day, and nags at me if I am not working on my goals.

This might seem like a silly thing to do, but at the end of the day, when something is staring at you right in the face, you have no choice but to acknowledge it.

This brings a lot of perspective to my day. Am I doing everything I need to do to achieve those goals? It's a tough pill to swallow when you are the only reason you are not pursuing your goals. So many of us make excuses on a daily basis for our misfortune and failures. Stop blaming everyone else. Control your destiny.

Every time you find yourself acting like a distracted squirrel, remind yourself what the real focus should be by looking at those sticky notes. Ask yourself if you are doing everything you can to achieve those goals.

EXPAND YOUR TACTICS.

Goals without tactics to achieve them represent a near impossible mission. It's like saying you want to get rich, with no plan for how. This is where tactics come into play. I can't tell you how many photographers I have consulted with who say things like, "I want to do \$250,000 in weddings." My next question is, "That's very possible, but how much do you charge for weddings?" They tell me they charge just \$2,000. With shock on my face, I then say, "The math doesn't really work here. You would need to shoot around 125 weddings a year." Incredulous, they then explain they want to shoot just 10 to 15 weddings a year.

You can see where this conversation is going. I see it all the time. People are not realistic about goals or what it takes to achieve them, and then are in complete denial about where they are in life. We have got to be realistic. I am all for dreaming big, but when it comes to tactics, this is where the rubber meets the road.

Tactics will quickly help you understand how realistic your goals are. In the example above, this person would have to charge about \$20K per wedding to achieve their goal. While that may be possible, it's not realistic, especially for someone starting out. You need interim goals before you shoot for that level.

Let's refocus. What do tactics look like? Let's say your goal is to quit your full-time job and become a full-time photographer. Great. I love this goal. It was one of mine a long time ago. Now write some tactics or mini-goals that need to happen before you can quit.

This isn't an exhaustive list of possibilities. It's an example of how you need to start thinking and working toward achieving your goals. It serves as a great reference point for when you decide to buy a new lens or start glamour photography. You can look to this list and ask yourself how the move helps you achieve your goal, or how it matches up against your tactics.

Stay focused.

GOAL

BECOME A FULL-TIME PHOTOGRAPHER.

TACTIC 1

BOOK 10 WEDDINGS AT \$2,500 EACH.

TACTIC 2

ATTEND 4 BRIDAL SHOWS.

TACTIC 3

BOOK 25 PORTRAIT SESSIONS.

TACTIC 4

SECOND-SHOOT FOR A MAJOR STUDIO TO LEARN THE INS AND OUTS.

M T

REEVALUATE EVERY 30 DAYS.

6 7
13 14
20 21
27 28

We would all be naïve if we didn't think that our goals and objectives change with time. It's inevitable. Once a year I determine the goals and objectives for the year ahead, but I know damn well that these goals and objectives will move and adjust.

Mark a date on your calendar once a month for the next 12 months. Label it "Goals Health Check." This check should take you no more than 30 minutes. The first thing you need to do is look over your goals and ask yourself if they've changed. If yes, adjust accordingly and repeat the previous exercises. If no, you need to ask how you are following your plan. Remember those tactics you listed? Are you executing those? If not, how do you ever expect to achieve your goals?

This reevaluation is normal, something I do all the time. What I wanted in January might have changed by the time July rolls around. It can be for any number of reasons. Don't feel like a failure because you are adjusting your goals. You are a failure if you continue to pursue goals you are no longer passionate about.



#PIVOT.

Let go of a losing plan. I say this a lot. All too often people hang on to a losing plan. This is a giant waste of time and energy. I have been guilty of this in the past, but over time, I have gotten better at letting go of something that's not working. We have to be willing to adjust.

Without goals and the tactics to support them, you are flying blind. We all have dreams and aspirations, but do you have the strength to go out there and achieve them against all odds? That's the hard part. Dreaming is easy. Getting up every day and looking fear and failure in the face—that's something not many people are wired to deal with.

Many would rather not compete than risk failing. It's as if there is some sort of comfort in convincing yourself you didn't fail because you never competed. I call BS on that one. Failing to compete is, in fact, failure. You are failing yourself. You are failing your dreams. Most importantly, you are not pursuing your full potential. How could you? If you don't risk failure, you will never know what success is. ■

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Sal Cincotta is an international award-winning photographer, educator, author and the publisher of *Shutter Magazine*. Sal's success is directly tied to the education he received in business school. He graduated from Binghamton University, a Top 20 business school, and has worked for Fortune 50 companies like Procter & Gamble and Microsoft. After spending 10 years in corporate America, Sal left to pursue a career in photography and has never looked back.

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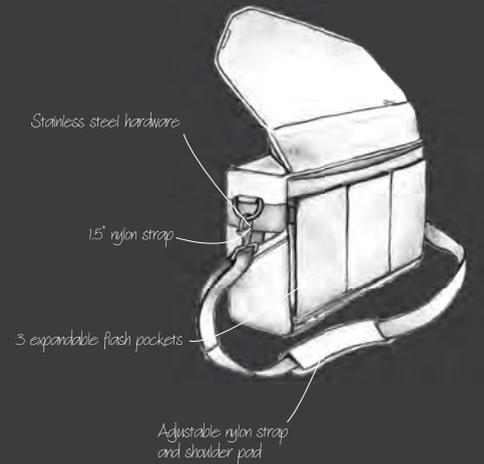
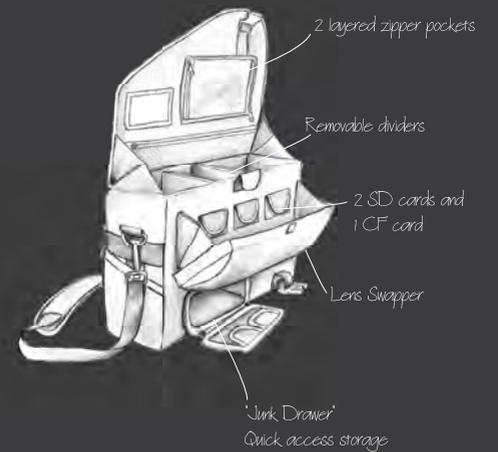
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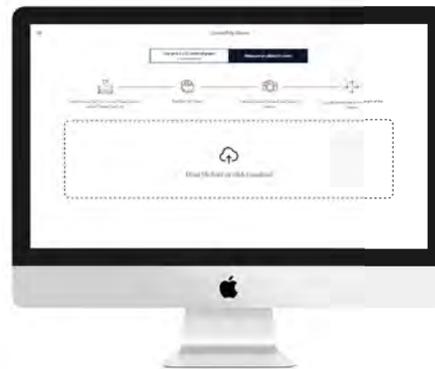
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with **Dustin Lucas**

Moving to a mobile workflow can seem more daunting than just taking pictures and storing them on your computer. I am constantly changing how I ingest, back up, edit and output files on a weekly basis, as well as the programs I am using. You have to try new things to save more time and get better at what you do. It's called efficiency. Making your images more accessible is a giant step in the right direction.

Incorporating mobility into your editing workflow is much like using social media to reach potential clients. The ability to edit across multiple devices while providing your clients access to your brand through social media channels is vital to your photography business.

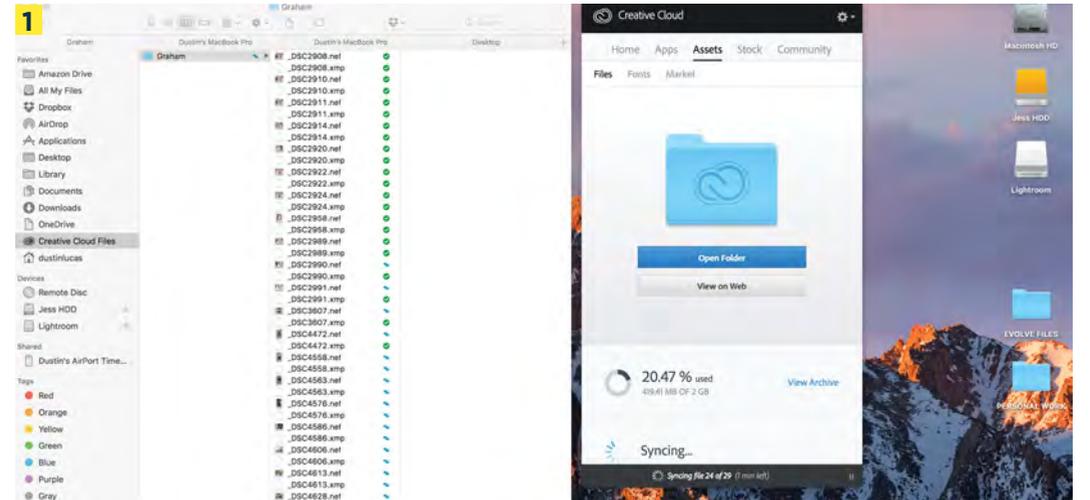
Let's look at how Lightroom allows you to be more mobile for editing, and why that's useful. I have a laptop for editing, and I can do it anywhere.

I am talking about your sync-ability between your images when you're editing with a program like On1 RAW 2017. With Lightroom CC, you can access the nondestructive edits made in your catalog across your mobile devices. The catalogs themselves aren't syncing; instead, you can edit the images in your browser or on Lightroom Mobile on a phone or tablet. Before we jump into Lightroom for mobile, let's cover Creative Cloud Libraries.

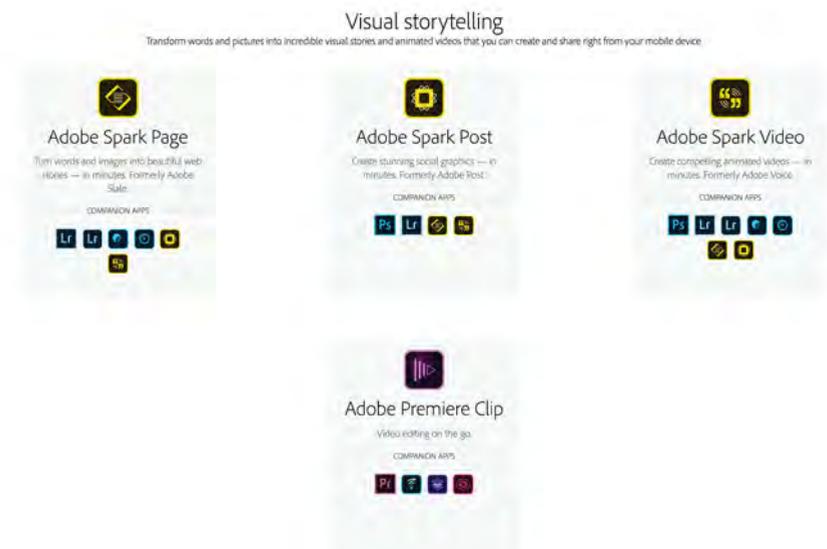
GET CREATIVE WITH CLOUD ASSETS

Adobe offers 2GB of free cloud storage on the Photography Plan, not much to write home about. It's not worth it to store Raw files or as a backup of any sort. It is useful for fully edited JPEGs. This is what Adobe had envisioned for cloud: smaller documents to sync across multiple devices. Now we have Creative Cloud Libraries to browse, sync and manage files. These sync from a desktop folder on your computer and are shared to your online libraries. (1)

From a photographer's perspective, the Creative Cloud Libraries is most useful when using other Adobe mobile apps, such as Adobe Spark Page and Portfolio. (2) Hundreds of edited JPEGs can be stored here to use for photo web designs. Another addition to these apps is Lightroom for mobile, which adds a layer of flexibility to editing that working in catalogs hasn't offered. (3)



2



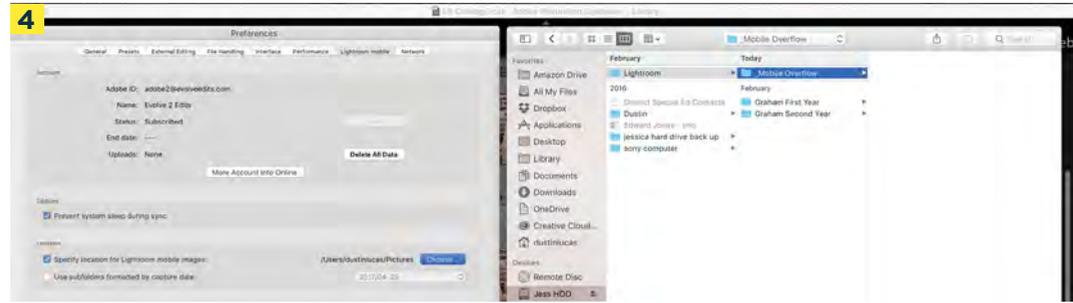
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Adobe Photoshop Lightroom for mobile

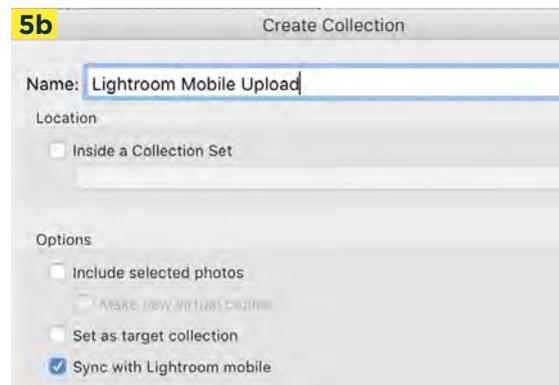


MORE MOBILITY ON YOUR DEVICES

Let's jump into Lightroom and set up preferences for the mobile app and syncing. In preferences, there is a separate tab for Lightroom mobile where we can review the activity and choose the location for mobile images to store. (4) This is very important when allowing the camera roll on your phone to sync with Lightroom mobile. Your computer HDD will fill up quickly; use an external or NAS drive to store this overflow of files.

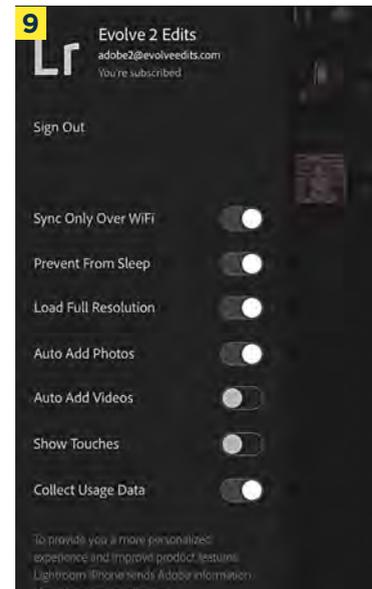


Now we can create a Collection to sync images to our Lightroom mobile app. In the Library module, hold Command and strike the "N" key to create a Collection. There is an option to sync with Lightroom mobile; make sure this is checked. (5a) Click Create, and you are ready to start selecting images and dragging them into this Collection. (6) When an image is dropped in, the syncing automatically starts. Within a few seconds, you have the Collection loaded to your mobile device with all the metadata and develop settings applied. We are already creating sync-ability within Lightroom like never before. (7)



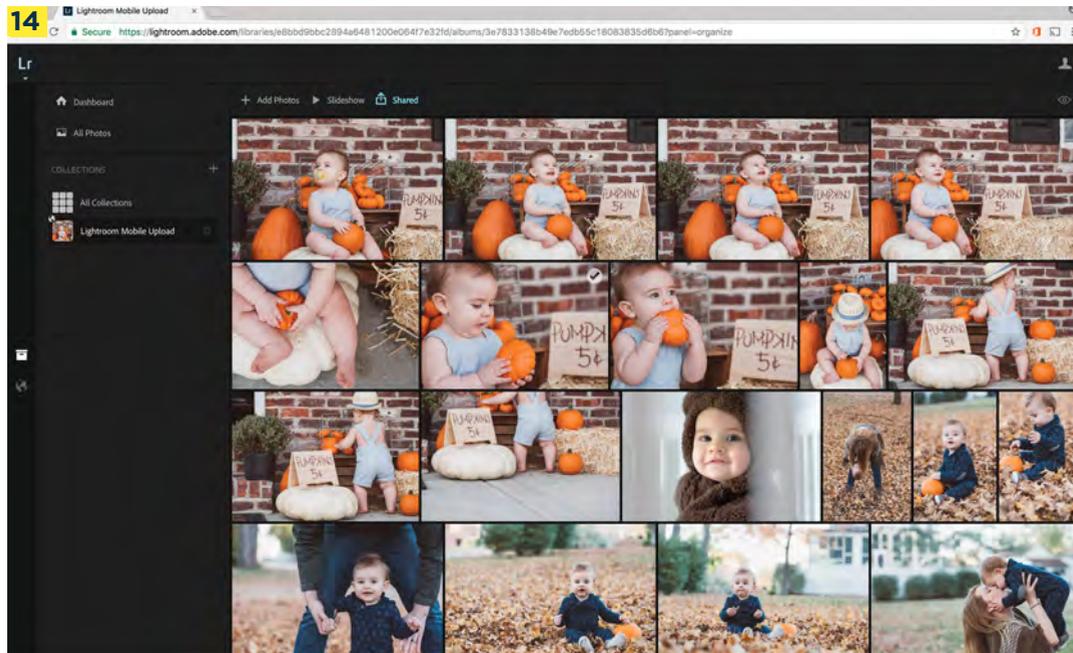
I love the Lightroom mobile app's ability on my iPhone to shoot in DNG. Goodbye, Apple camera app—say hello to Adobe Lightroom mobile. Recent updates made this possible for Android users as well. This is nice for taking behind-the-scenes shots at an event or even some stellar quick snaps while the DSLR is tucked away. (8) Pro tip: Choose the option to sync only over Wi-Fi. Otherwise, you will be paying your cellular provider when you go over your data. (9)

Editing features are very similar to those in the Develop panel in Lightroom. I like that the develop settings from an already-edited file in the Lightroom desktop app appear identical in Lightroom mobile. (10) It's easy to scroll through them like the filmstrip in Lightroom desktop. You can import images previously taken with your phone to sync to your catalog. This provides a great opportunity to organize all those iPhone photos and keep everything in sync. This is useful for social media posts while photographing a client. (11)

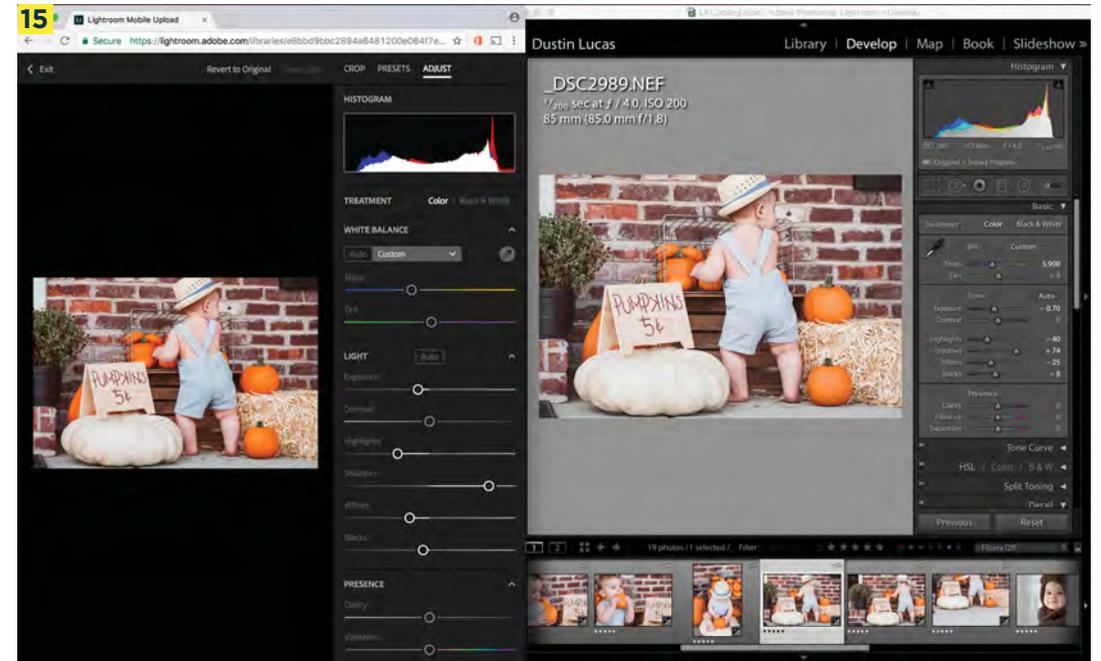


OPEN IMAGES IN THE BROWSER

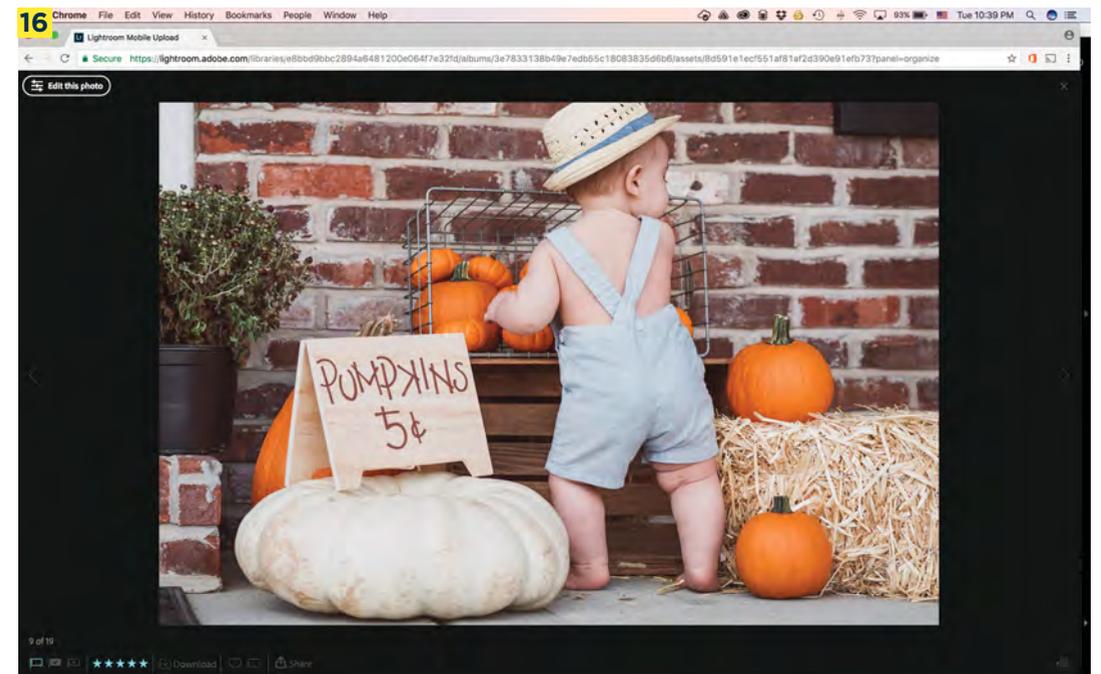
After we have created a collection in Lightroom and synced it with Lightroom mobile, we can make images public or leave them private to access in our web browser. You can edit in your web browser now, and no longer need Lightroom installed on another computer. Select the collection and then right-click. Hover over Lightroom mobile links and choose either Make Collection Public or Private Link: View on Web. (12) If you make it public, you will need to click the link created in the upper right corner of grid mode in Lightroom. (13) This opens the Lightroom browser app in a new tab in your web browser. (14)

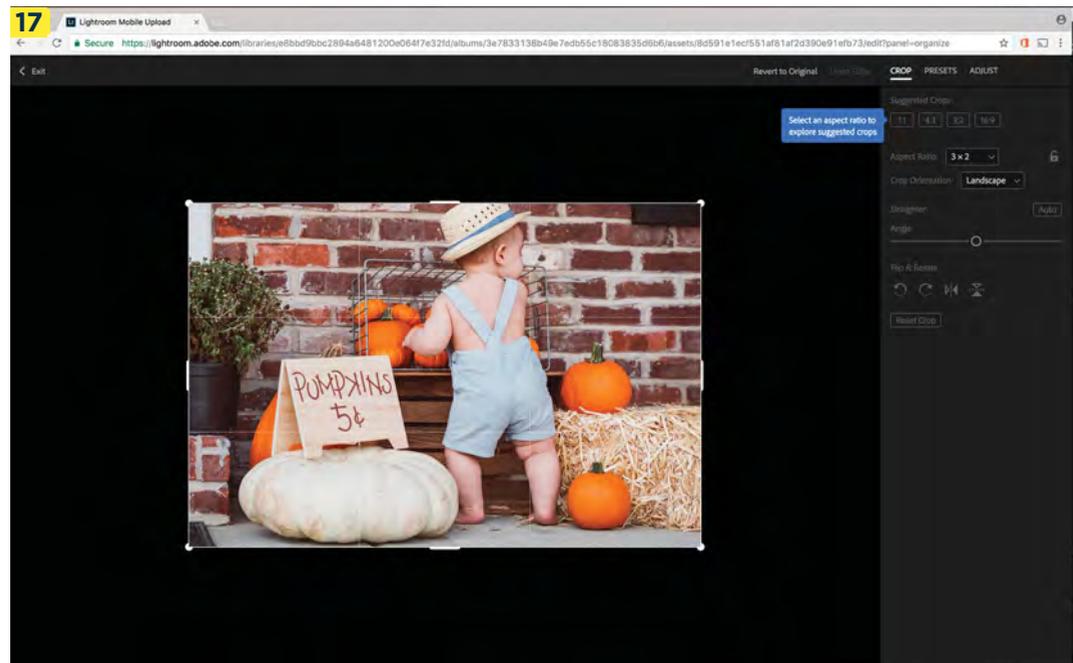


This is a huge step for Lightroom’s flexibility. Before, you were limited to an individualized catalog that did not allow for sync-ability or open on NAS hard drives. For team-based workflows, it was inefficient to have to trade catalogs and work one at a time. Now Adobe is taking notes from OnOne RAW’s ability to edit in one location and instantly see these changes on multiple platforms. (15)

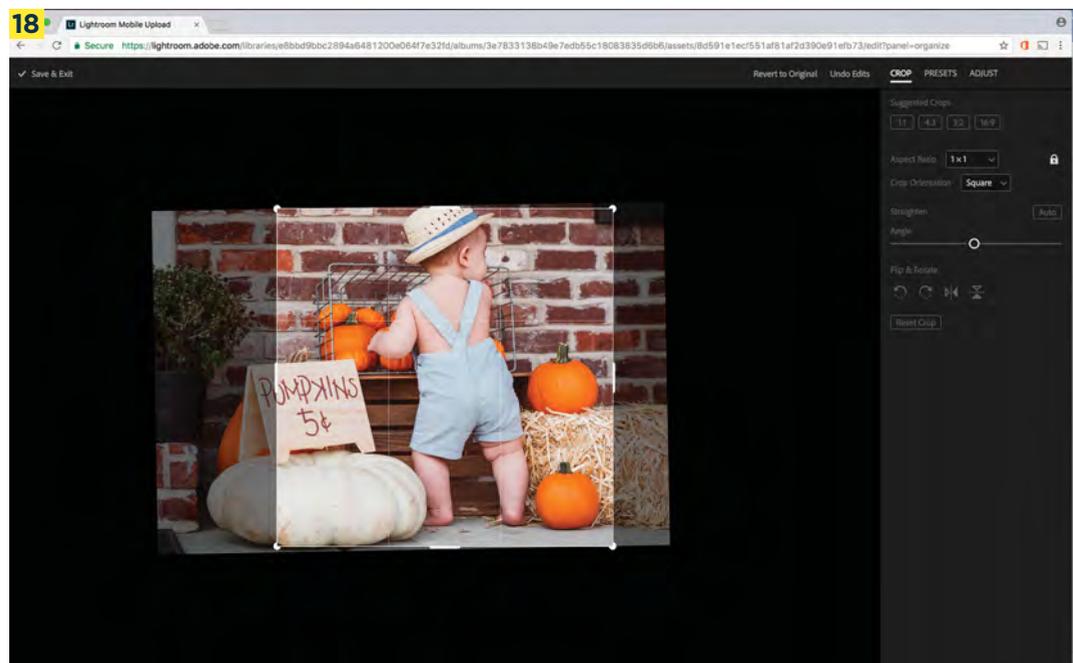


In the Lightroom browser app, you have a similar layout as Apple’s photo app. Select an image and choose Edit This Photo in the upper right hand corner, and we are ready to start adjusting. You’ll notice the settings from the desktop app are already applied. You have three categories to edit in: Crop, Presets and Adjust. (16)



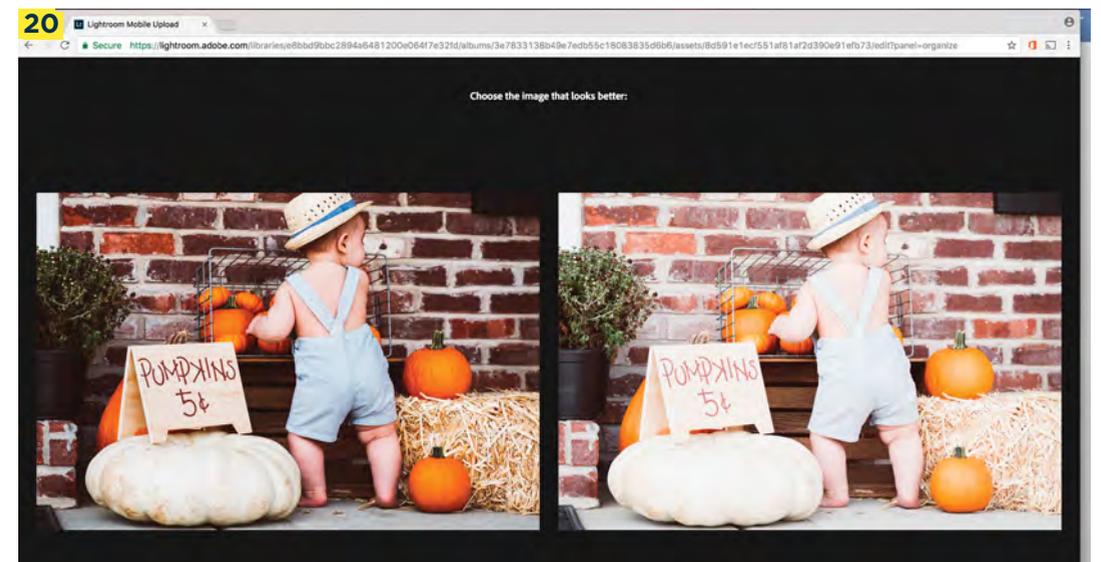
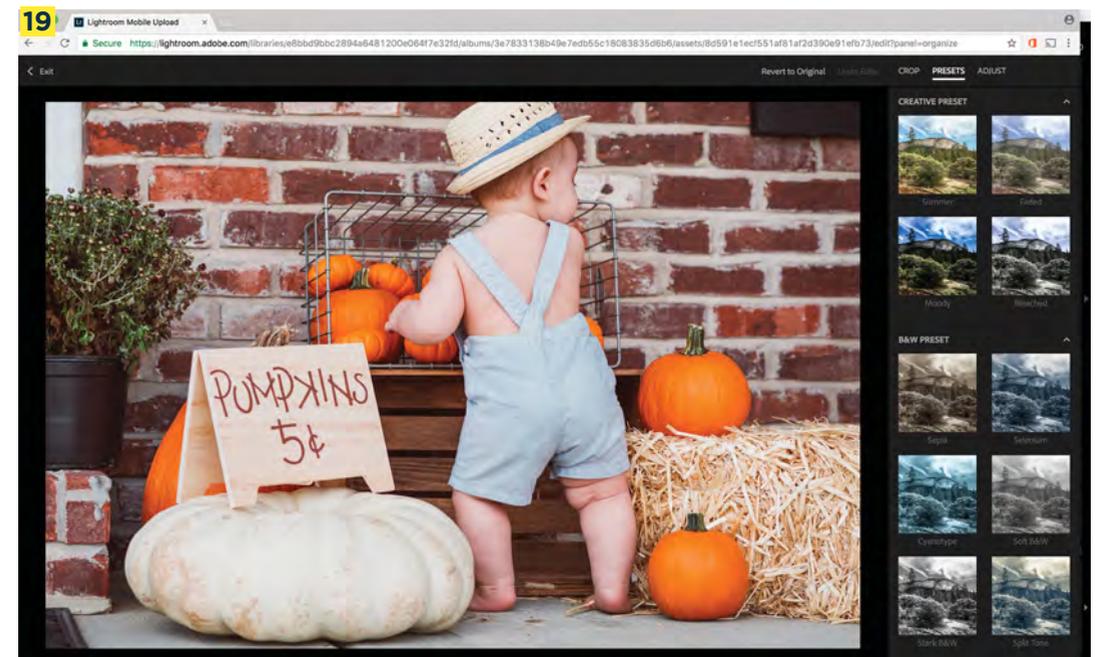


In the Crop panel, there is a new feature called Suggested Crop that analyzes the image and auto-crops based on ratio and orientation. (17) It seems simple and useful, with no batching options that I can see, much like auto-straightening at a batch level. Adobe may want to explore this. (18)



In the Presets panel, there is nothing to rant and rave about. The predetermined presets are somewhat limited in their application. It would be nice to see the image previewed in each preset. This feature of OnOne RAW made it stand out. (19)

In the Adjust panel, more commonly known as the Basic panel in the desktop app, the most used tools are White Balance and Light. An interesting upgrade is the Auto feature, which lets you choose between two options for the best image. Adobe is collecting data to make its auto-tone feature even better; the image still needs some work, but it's a great start. (20)





SYNC-ABILITY BETWEEN ALL MY DEVICES

I love Adobe CC's accessibility and Lightroom's mobility. I now have instant sync-ability between my computer, phone and tablet. (21) I won't be editing extensively on my phone or tablet, but I can cull images with ease. Lightroom's flexibility in my web browser is a helpful feature when I am on the go. All of this is free with your Lightroom subscription. Try it out and see for yourself. ■



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.

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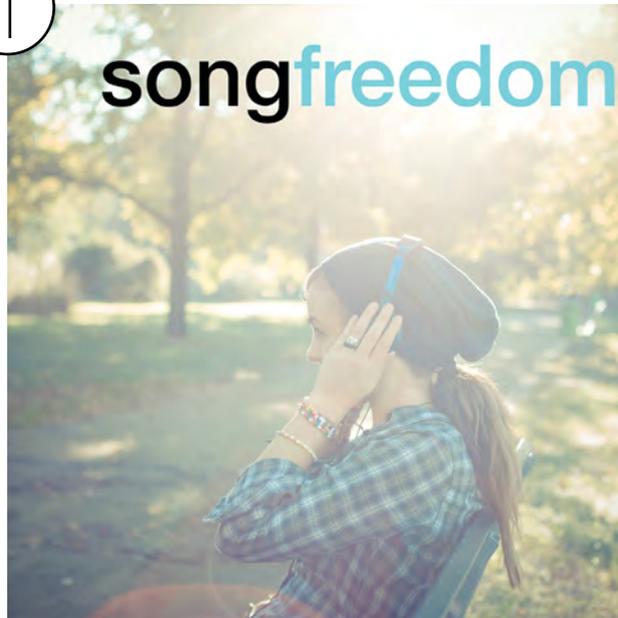
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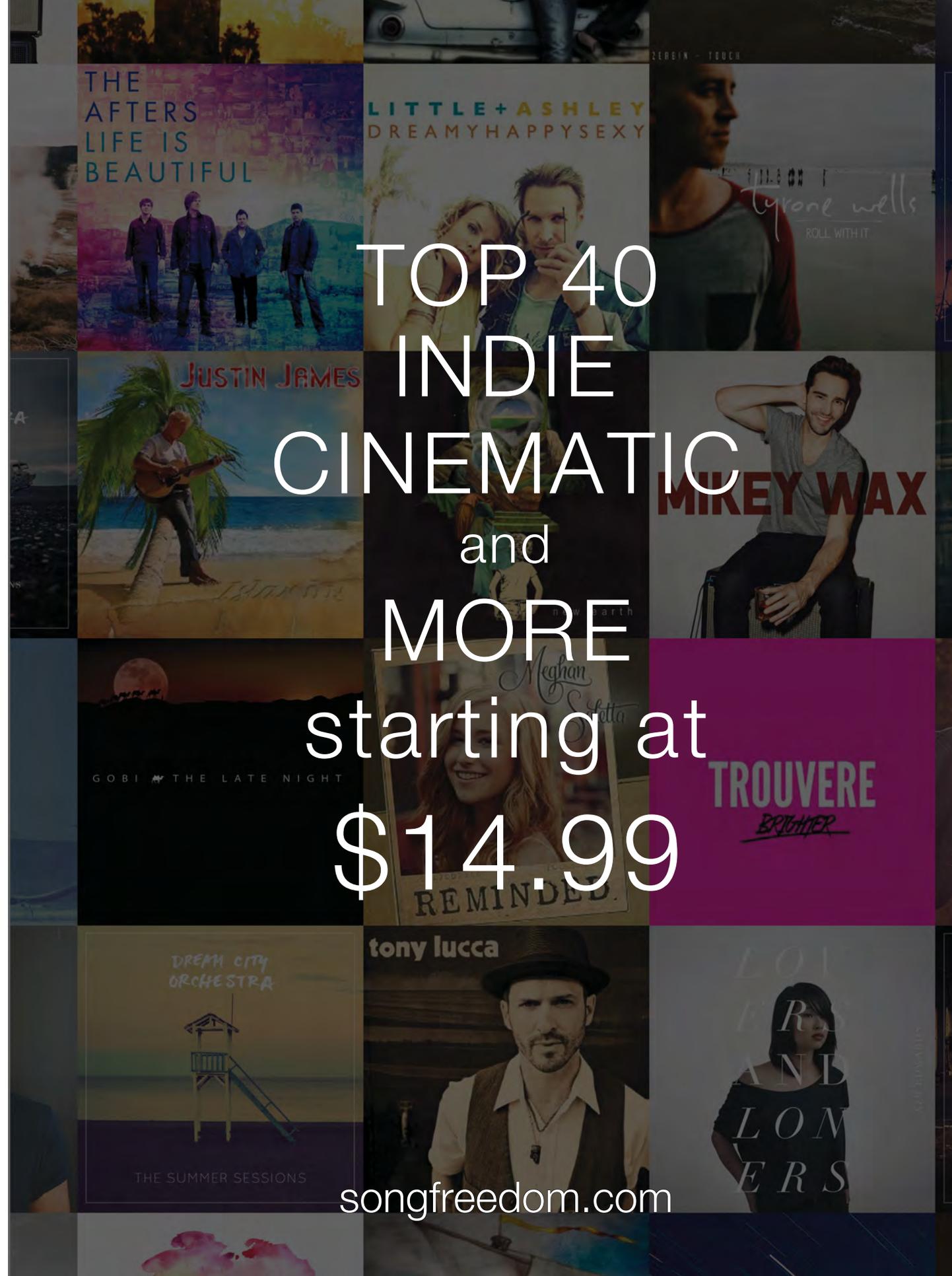
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THE CHILDREN EDITION

Featuring

- 50 | **Transitional Newborn Posing** with Ana Brandt
- 62 | **3 Wardrobe Hacks to Take Maternity From Mundane to Magnificent** with Casey Dittmer
- 74 | **Capturing the Light Inside: Photographing Medically Fragile Children** with Sweet Nectar Society
- 86 | **Higher-Profit, Lower-Stress Newborn Niche** with Eileen Blume
- 98 | **Creating Fantastical Worlds for Your Clients** with Laura Schumpert
- 110 | **How to Make Money With Maternity Portraits** with Karen Bagley
- 124 | **Newborn Photography: Starting From Scratch** with Lisa Rapp
- 136 | **Inspirations** from Our Readers



TRANSITIONAL

NEWBORN POSING

with **Ana Brandt**



Photographing newborns is an amazing job that poses unique challenges. The most important thing I have learned over my 18 years of working with babies is that a smooth-running session requires transitional posing and planning for the next shot.

It may take 20 minutes to pose a baby in the perfect position, only to have her move in such a way that you have to start all over. Assistants are essential for planning the next shot while I'm creating the first one. By creating at least two to three variations that require very little movement of the baby, you can easily create several images that work well in a series or book.

Transitional posing can be as simple as adding or removing a hat or headband or changing your angle. By continually transitioning throughout a session, you can achieve a great variety for your gallery while keeping a seamless look.



Images © Ana Brandt

When clients come in for a session, I have them choose their wrap and pick a few outfits, and I always recommend hats or headbands. I start with a wrapped baby because it's the most comfortable way to start a session. Once the baby is settled, I can easily create another look by switching hats or headbands without disturbing him. I then begin a series of transitions by slowly adjusting the wrap and body angles, all while keeping the baby in the same basket.

I do not do any kind of pre-setup before the client comes. I wait until they arrive to see the kinds of poses and props they want. After they pick a few wraps and outfits, I plan two to three sets to start with. By having more than one set ready, I can quickly move from one to the next.

When babies are on a beanbag, I have a wrap handy, and add bonnets or headbands to transition as much as I can.

Transitional posing can work for any type of pose, whether you're using a basket, prop or beanbag. But it can be challenging to get a baby into the perfect pose. Soothing, shushing and wrapping is so important, but what happens when the baby is naked and sound asleep and you already have the shot? In the transitional posing method, the idea is to move the baby slightly, without much movement. I capture two to three "look changes" with each pose.

I am always thinking ahead, planning my next move. The clients see that the movements are soft and subtle, the transitioning easy and gentle, and their baby is well cared for. They know they will have lots of images to choose from.

Sometimes just an angle change can count as a transition. Once you settle the baby, before you change poses, change angles.

In the first set of a newborn session, I'm able to capture three to seven looks without moving the baby. I always start with a diaper under the wrap because they have just eaten. I then slowly transition and end up with a naked baby before changing sets.

Transitioning can start with subtle movements. Once you have the shot, you want to perfect it. You can do this by transitioning just a little bit.

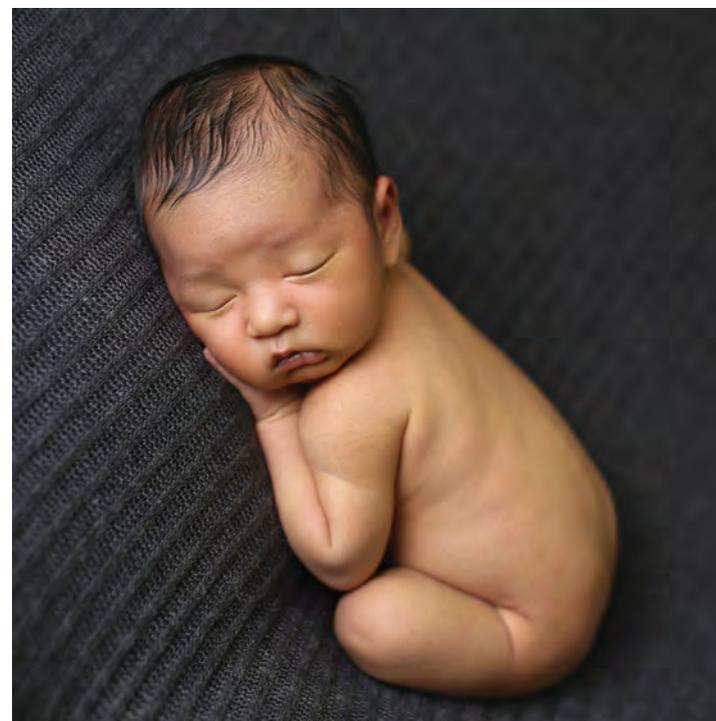
This next series of transitional posing is with the baby on a beanbag. Notice the baby is in the same pose. In three easy transitions, we show one angle, then a second angle, then naked.



Image © Ana Brandt



Images © Ana Brandt



I can easily add a hat or other prop, and continue the transition with little movement. There are usually slight adjustments with feet or hands, but the idea is to keep the baby in similar positions and then adjust. The adjustments can be minimal—such as adding or removing items—or actual poses.

If you have similar props or items handy, you can transition into totally different looks. In this example, I started with a simple baby wrap and then added other colors of layers to transition with hardly any movement to the baby.



Transitional posing allows you to gain babies' trust as you work with them in a gentle manner. Photographers often do "baby led" transitioning, which means working with the baby's movements. A stretch, yawn or turn of the head can all work in your favor if you are ready.



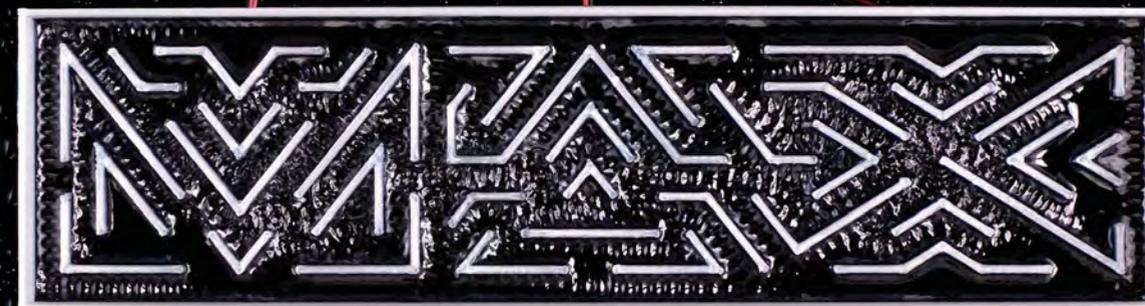
Images © Ana Brandt

Another great reason for transitional newborn posing is that, by making slight adjustments, you can learn to perfect your work. We are always trying to grab the perfect pose, which is often discovered while transitioning. Rarely is my first shot the best; after a series of slight changes and movement, I can study the baby, angles and light to find the gems. ■



Ana Brandt runs a studio in Tustin, California, where she loves shooting all things pregnancy and newborn. She works in natural and studio light, is mom to three amazing little ones and teaches workshops internationally.

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Three Wardrobe Hacks to Take Maternity From
Mundane to *Magnificent*
with Casey Dittmer

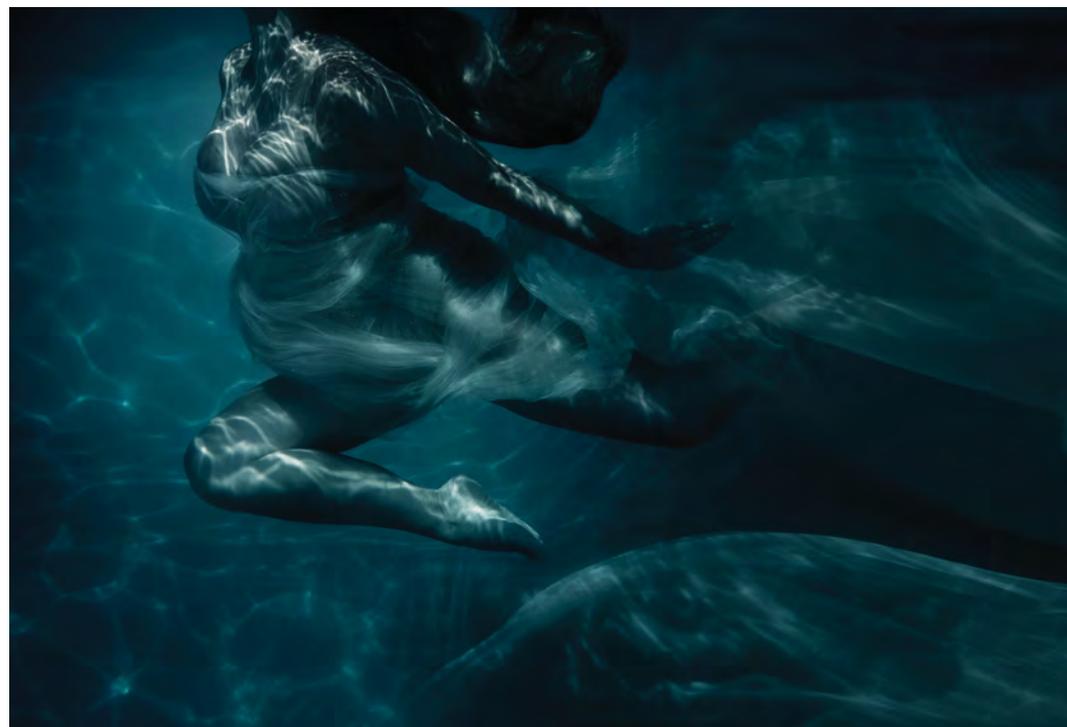
Maternity portraiture is quickly becoming a steady niche in the industry. But as the popularity grows, so does the market oversaturation and the increase in competition for clients. Create a dynamic look and style so you stand out in the sea of maternity shooters.

This month, I show you options for getting started in creating a stylized maternity look. You can always purchase gowns and accessories from vendors that offer popular looks; you can enlist the talents of a seamstress to sew a custom look for you; or you can follow these three hacks to quickly get you that stylized look without breaking the bank. These simple methods can get you on the road to building your own custom wardrobe.

THE SWIMSUIT HACK

When we began offering our Goddess sessions, I couldn't afford to have a gown made, so I made do with what I had. I knew that creating a structure for the top of the gown would be the most difficult. I wanted to find a way to cheat the system and have it premade. Here is what I came up with.

- Go to a department store and find bikini tops that inspire you. Expecting mommas usually run a bit bigger in the chest, so I always buy a large. I'd rather it be a bit big and clip it in the back rather than too small. In the beginning, I kept it simple with solid colors, but don't be afraid to play with textures and lines to create an interesting focus for the dress. (Bonus Tip: Pay attention to seasons. Go when tops are on clearance, and get a whole bunch. That way, you have several options ready for when you get inspired to create a new gown. You can also use bras and cami tops to achieve the same look.)
- Head to the fabric store with your new tops. You are looking for flowy fabrics such as chiffon, organza and soft tulle. Don't worry about making a scene. Unroll it a bit and give it a *whoosh*. Make sure it flows and falls the way you want. Find a color that complements the top. If you don't match colors exactly, that's okay. You will never see the difference when photographed. Walk the aisles and see what inspires you. Buy three pieces of fabric, each 3 yards long. This gives you an adequate train to toss.
- You'll need a needle and thread. You want a thread color that will hide in the bikini top and fabric, so don't use white on black. Take the fabric on the short end and attach it to the top. Use a basic whipstitch or the tried-and-true in-out/in-out method. Gather it slightly as you go to create a pleated look. I start at the middle of the front and attach one piece along each side of the bikini. Use the third to close up the back. Don't forget to leave a little slack in the back near the closure so when the top is undone, you have extra room to get it off and on. It's okay if it drapes a little in the back. You won't see it.



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Image © Legacy Photography

JUST MAKE IT WORK

Don't get intimidated by a project because you feel it needs to be high-quality construction. Just make it work. Does it fit? Yep. Does it cover them adequately? Yep. Will it survive a few whooshes? Yep. All right, you are good to go. As you continue to build your wardrobe and try different techniques, your construction quality and confidence will improve. Here are some ways to hack the creation process.

- Go get yourself a damn glue gun. If you don't have one, you are missing out. In a hurry and need to attach a whooshing train? Glue that sucker on. Need to add rhinestones to make a gown unique and higher end? Glue it. Glue guns are my go-to. It is way easier to make complicated accessories and quick fixes with a glue gun.

For our Midnight Maternity look at ShutterFest, we made a gorgeous gown for under \$100. We bought a \$7 mesh dress from Amazon and hot-glued cheap rhinestones, forming coverage across the chest and creating an ombre down the front. We grabbed a black tulle skirt we had at the studio and placed it around the model's calves. It wasn't attached, just held by the elastic waistband, creating an instant mermaid dress. We finished the look by creating a feathered collar in our hotel room using cardboard, a strip of tulle, ribbon and feathers (don't forget your best friend the glue gun). Our look was complete couture, all without a single stitch. You can do this.

- Safety pins—don't leave home without them. Even when we buy a beautiful gown from a vendor, we still want to customize it so other photographers won't have the exact same look. Use the pins to add a tossing train, glam up the neckline or to temporarily adhere details to the bodice. That way, you can use a dress multiple times and still create new looks. In the interest of shooting to sell, take some pictures without the modifications and then quickly change it up. It adds instant variety to your session, and makes it harder for them to choose which ones to order...so they may as well buy them all. (Bonus: If a seam happens to pop, don't panic. Grab a few pins and keep shooting.)
- Don't forget: No one will see the imperfections. Raw fabric edges, glue drips, straight sew lines... for the most part, no one cares. You can't see it in photographs. Don't be sloppy, but also understand that the overall look is what is most important. We hear so many times, "You made this?" Your client will be so giddy about the level of service and thought it took for you to make them a custom look, she won't care about the rough edges here and there.



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BE A REBEL - BREAK THE RULES

Think outside the box to create the very best looks and styles. Watch clearance sections and fashion trends, and always ask yourself: Can I get a bump in there? There are no rules. If someone says there are, break them. These dynamic maternity sessions should serve two main purposes: shock and awe your viewers, leaving a lasting impression; and give your client the supermodel experience, making her feel amazing about herself. Own it, and she will too.

- Stretch it, stretch it real good. Don't be afraid to make everyday nonmaternity clothes work for you. Long-sleeve knit shirts, minidresses, lingerie—all of these things can easily be adapted to create a custom maternity look. Stretchy is best, but pay attention to items that don't seem suitable. Find the bones, or base, of your look, and build it from there.
- Try to get the best bang for your buck on items you create. You want them to be adaptable to clients of different sizes. Use stretchy fabrics. Create interchangeable pieces. Mix and match. Reuse pieces in different combinations to keep your costs lower. We have several minidresses, tulle skirts and bra tops that can be used for both pregnant and nonpregnant clients. This way, our wardrobe makes us more money.
- Never underestimate the power of a piece of fabric. No sewing, gluing or cutting necessary. Tuck that baby up under a bra and whoosh. Let the wind hug the fabric around her body. Let it soar. Capture it flowing around her in a pool of water. The movement and grace that a single piece of fabric can add is simplistic and beautiful. Don't overthink it.



Images © Legacy Photography



Image © Legacy Photography

Keeping it simple, at least in the beginning, is a good way to start. Any style or gown is enhanced by poses, lighting and location. Don't be afraid to try new things. Get crafty. And, when in doubt, just tip, dip and—*whoosh!* ■



Casey Dittmer is an award-winning published photographer from Western Colorado. As a 17-year veteran of the photographic industry, Casey has seen trends, economies and businesses come and go. She loves traveling and sharing her knowledge in the hope that it will help other photographers build a strong base for their business and avoid some of the roadblocks she has encountered.

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Julia Kelleher M.Photog. runs a high-end studio in Bend, OR specializing in newborn and family portrait art. She is an International Diamond Photographer Of The Year, a 9-time Creative Live instructor and an expert in business & marketing education with a worldwide following.

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Capturing the Light Inside:

Photographing Medically Fragile Children

with Sweet Nectar Society



Photographing children who are medically, physically or mentally compromised is not something most photographers may think they are prepared for, but if you're ever given the opportunity, we encourage you to try it. This demographic is underserved by our industry.

To answer the call for this need, we created Sweet Nectar Society, which provides beautiful free portraits to families affected by serious illness, disability or traumatic injury. Over the past five years, we've photographed hundreds of children, and with each session, we learn new ways to work with children's unique needs and abilities.

With the insight we've gained through these experiences, we've put together a set of tips, tricks and friendly advice for those who are interested in providing a more personalized service to these children, who have so much to share with the world.



Image © Sweet Nectar Society



Image © Sweet Nectar Society

❁ BE EMOTIONALLY PREPARED

We are humans who feel empathy and emotion. These children will touch your heart and teach you things you've never imagined. It's okay to feel unsure, nervous, worried and sad during your client's session. But our job is not to pity them; it is to share their story through the images we capture. While you are with the child and family, you need to put yourself into photographer mode. Focus on your shots, the light and getting the most of your images. When you're done, take some time to soak everything in. Many tears have been shed during editing or in the car after a session. Allow yourself those feelings. When you are with your client, though, make the experience as lighthearted and enjoyable as possible. This is a chance to make something very stressful feel very normal and encouraging for the children and their families. This may be their first experience with a professional photographer—or in some cases, the last—so make it count.

❁ LEARN ABOUT THE CHILD BEFORE THE SESSION

This information will help you prepare the right environment, and will give you confidence throughout the session. Talk to parents or caregivers ahead of time. Ask simple questions: Does your child have any limitations I should know about? Is an outdoor setting okay, or would they be more comfortable indoors? Are there any sensitivities I should know about? Is there anything that frightens or upsets your child?

✿ LEARN TEAMWORK

Use the help of caregivers during sessions. They have the same goal as you do, and they can provide much needed help. Caregivers provide additional physical support so the child can sit or stand. Caregivers can jump in and out of the frame to help grab the child's attention. They can look out for signs of distress or enjoyment, and give you a heads up. Ask what positions your client enjoys, and work with what is comfortable for the child. Most parents of special-needs children are used to telling doctors, nurses, social workers and countless others the details of their child's diagnosis and the care they need. Don't be shy when asking how you can make the experience as straightforward and pleasant as possible. You both want beautiful images of this child. Let them help you obtain that.

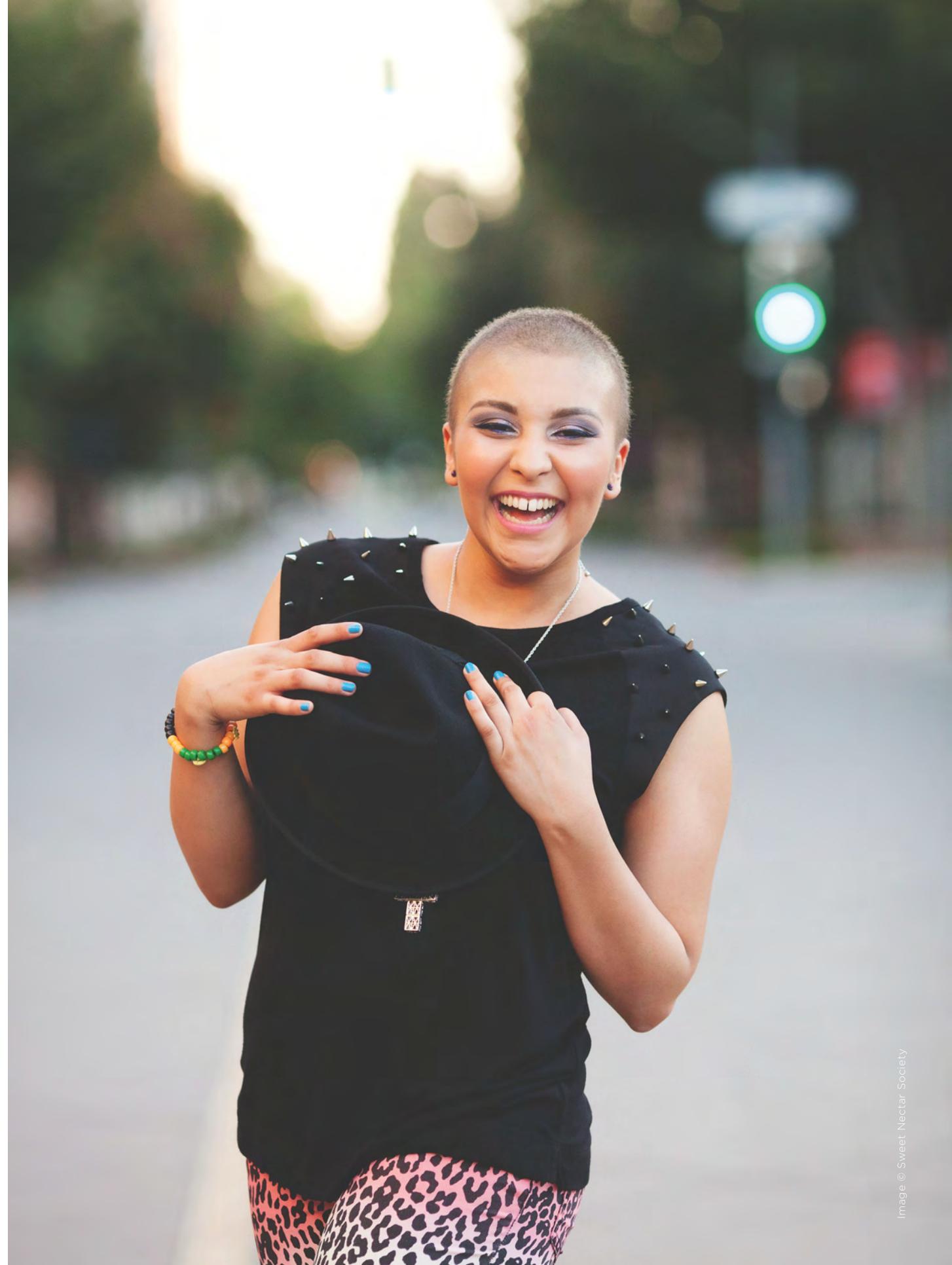
✿ BE AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS

Many circumstances can be overlooked when photographing children with medical limitations. A child in a wheelchair may not do well in a hilly park setting. A child with a sensory disorder may not enjoy being photographed next to a busy street. If a child is sensitive to the sun, make sure there is plenty of cover shade. If a child is undergoing certain treatments for cancer or a liver condition, their skin pigmentation may pick up the surrounding colors, so bright green grass could end up being an editing nightmare. Think about which locations will best suit your client's needs, and choose them based on your research. Being prepared benefits you and your clients.

✿ TAKE CUES FROM THE CHILD'S COMMUNICATION STYLE

Each child communicates in his or her own way. Be aware of how the child is communicating with you—verbally, with body language, facial expression or eye contact. Following their lead makes the child feel safe and content during their shoot. Learning how to read each child takes time and practice. Look for signs. If you sense the child is becoming frustrated or pressured, back off a bit and let them come to you. If the child is not able to stay seated very long, allow them to get up and wander around while you follow behind.

If the child feels more comfortable sitting with a parent or sibling, enlist that person's help, and then slowly work that person out of the frame. Always talk to children as though they understand fully what is going on, as most will. Feel free to ask the child if it's okay that you photograph them. Do they mind sitting here? You can ask, "Have you had enough?" Children are much more aware of what they need than we may think they are.

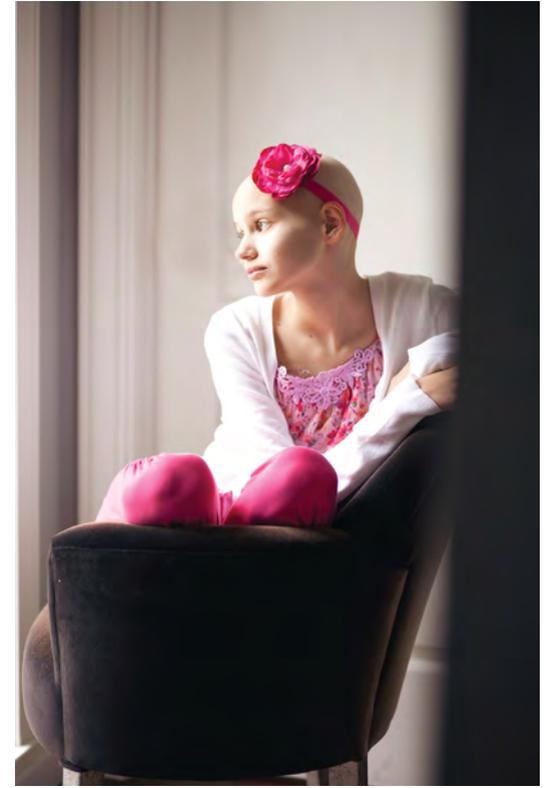




Images © Sweet Nectar Society



Images © Sweet Nectar Society





Images © Sweet Nectar Society

✿ HAVE PATIENCE

The children we photograph endure endless treatments, therapies and appointments. This can make them unwilling to cooperate in new situations. When this happens, we give the child her space and ease her into this new setting. We use simple techniques like blow bubbles, sing or tell them a story. There's no shortage of silly dancing and noisemaking during our sessions.

It takes time and work to establish trust. You have to be willing to put the effort into creating the images you desire. A forced, rushed or staged-looking image will always show through. Honest emotion takes patience. As a rule of thumb, we double the amount of time we would normally plan. During your communication with the parents, you will learn about any limitations that may require additional time.

✿ HIGHLIGHT THE CHILD'S SPIRIT AND PERSONALITY

A disability or illness does not define a child. After you've spent some time with the child, you will see his sparkle shining bright. Whether he is verbal or nonverbal, mobile or immobile, his light will show through, and it is your job to capture those moments.

While we want to highlight the child's personality and not focus entirely on his diagnosis, that doesn't mean we want to hide it, either. His diagnosis is part of his journey. Find ways to include these details, but they shouldn't steal all the focus. The viewer should first see a child's personality and expression, and then his special circumstances. You always want his spirit to be the heart of the photos, but medical tubes, a bald head, a wheelchair or scars are also a part of who they are.

✿ GO WITH THE FLOW

Some sessions are more challenging than others. The child may be frustrated, tired or in pain. She may be frightened, anxious or unable to communicate something that is wrong. You'll be able to get just one angle for some children.

You may not have the best location, lighting or space. We always take a lifestyle approach to the situation. We capture the whole scene: a mother trying to console her child, the room full of machines and charts, hospital wristband, the many details that make up that child's story. All of these are important.

Reading someone's personality quirks, their emotional state and their comfort level starts with the eyes. The eyes are said to be the window to the soul, and these children have some of the sweetest souls you will ever be privileged enough to meet.



Image © Sweet Nectar Society

Our job is to bring out the glimmer of light from within each client, no matter what kind of photography we're doing. By putting careful consideration, time and unconditional love into each session, you are sure to capture the light inside.

Hopefully these tips will inspire those photographers who are interested in providing children of all abilities an enjoyable experience and images their families will cherish for a lifetime. ■



Brittany Wilbur and Carrie Anne Miranda's Sweet Nectar Society has provided hundreds of children and their families professional photography sessions at no cost since 2012. The mission of these Central California-based photographers is to spread awareness of and support for families dealing with medical trauma through the stories of the children they photograph. sweetnectarsociety.org

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LOWER-STRESS NEWBORN NICHE

with Eileen Blume



Image © Eileen Blume

Do you dream of creating a newborn business that energizes you, enriches your family and keeps its hands off your personal life? As a working photographer and mother of three young kids, I empathize deeply with the longing “to make it all work.” Trying to balance work and life can be so difficult. I’ve often felt discouraged, and believed the lie that my own dreams were somehow unreasonable, out of reach or that I was unworthy to realize them. Have you been there?

Before I give you the four steps I used to launch my luxury newborn studio from day one, you need to know this important fact about me: I am a huge introvert. I also possess almost zero natural confidence. So I would not have believed this feat possible without some serious encouragement. Now I’m here to pass it on to you.

If these four ideas resonate, I invite you to access my exclusive 30-minute video course on the topic. It’s not the short video embedded in this article (although you can start there). This longer video was part of a recent paid curriculum online. This month, I want to give it to you for free—you, the hard-working yet self-deprecating woman who understands where I’m coming from: Go to bit.ly/4steps4newborns for free access. If nothing else, you’ll see how obviously self-conscious I felt when recording it, yet how little that matters when it comes to the sound principles that make businesses like mine and the women I coach work for us.

Now let’s dive in to those all-important four steps.

1. SIMPLIFY

First I want you to forget the idea that you even need a physical studio to have a successful studio business. When my husband, Phillip, and I started our business eight years ago, we did everything out of our 1,200-square-foot home and still managed to be successful. Newborn sessions took place either in our dark living room or at a client’s apartment.

It’s so important to simplify. Simplify your process. Simplify your gear. Simplify everything. You want as little overhead as possible, especially when starting out. For newborn photography, there is actually a very short list of essential equipment, and the same items will pop up over and over again if you simply Google “newborn photography equipment”: posing beanbag, space heater, backdrop stand, single light (I recommend the Spiderlite by Westcott), blankets and wraps.

You also want to choose a simple lens that does the job well—either a 50mm or 35mm. Avoid prop addiction. The best thing you can do to keep it simple is to stick with neutral colors. This is the most timeless style for any client, and your work will never look dated or gimmicky.



Image © Eileen Blume

2. FOCUS ON THE END PRODUCT

Next, you need to offer a core product that contains multiple images. For Blume Babies, I offer an 8x10 linen fine-art box from Finao with matted 5x7's. Some studios are more about wall displays, and that's totally fine. Perhaps you can offer a wall collage of some sort. Just think of a core product you want each client to end up taking home and treasuring.

Remember, if you want to create a luxury brand that earns you the money you deserve, you'll need to provide that luxury product. This is going to keep you profitable enough so that you're not pulling your hair out to keep your business open and your family fed.

Your session fee should not include digital images. I'm all about offering digitals, but they need to come at a high price. Consider gifting them with certain artwork purchase levels or, as an incentive, offer the Facebook-size digitals only with images that are ordered.



Image © Eileen Blume

3. MARKET SMARTER

You don't want to be the photographer who is on the hilltop with all the other photographers, jumping and shouting, "Pick me. Pick me. My images look the best." My advice is to save on traditional "broad" marketing and instead find creative ways to target your ideal clients by partnering with local businesses, whether it be a baby boutique, hospital or OB office.

You want to create value for the partner business, like offering gift certificates that are labeled as being "from" their office, "for" their clients. Put ego aside. This allows partners to look good to their clients, and it brings you business. The certificates can include a session discount at your studio. Or you can design a marketing piece for your partner business using your images.

Images © Eileen Blume

Another way to partner is to do a model call, which is what I actually did through our local hospital to jumpstart Blume Babies. The first step was to walk into the hospital, start asking around and find the people in charge of marketing. I made the connection, and then we got approval to make flyers for the hospital to hand out to pregnant moms advertising a free session with Blume Babies. The hospital, in turn, would receive the images for marketing purposes, and I was able to build my portfolio quickly; so it was a win-win situation.

Pro tip: Remember, you're in charge of designing the certificates and marketing pieces for your partners. Yet those same pieces will be distributed by the partner, right? So be sure all information sections (especially your bio and/or accolades) are flattering and written in third person. You're trying to earn trust from potential clients, which increases the likelihood of bookings. Since the certificates are not a traditional marketing plea, but rather a gift from the hospital, all the positive information inside holds much more weight in the future client's mind. It's a powerful word-of-mouth referral.



Image © Eileen Blume

4. SELL THE EXPERIENCE

Remember that it is the parents who hold the purse strings, not the baby. Of course the babies are our subjects. Their safety is paramount, but they aren't the only ones whose comfort is important. Research proves that all purchasing decisions are made emotionally, so you want to set up the experience to appeal to all their senses.

Create a spa-like experience for the parents during your shoot or sales session. Have scented candles burning as they walk in, snacks and drinks, beautiful artwork for them to look at. I even have these lovely little chalk glasses I got at Pier One; I write my clients' names on them, and they think it is the coolest thing. When you offer an amazing experience, they project their emotions onto the finished images, and all of that translates into satisfied clients who sing your praises.



Image © Eileen Blume



Images © Eileen Blume

CONCLUSION

So those are the four steps in a nutshell. Simplify, focus on end product, market smarter and sell the experience. If you want to go deeper, download my full presentation on establishing your newborn brand at bit.ly/4steps4newborns.

I mentioned I'm an introvert. My husband, Phillip Blume, is the extrovert, the go-getter, the photographer and monthly contributor to this magazine whom you surely know. Since we got married a decade ago, he has supported me and pushed me to do things I never believed I could do, from speaking in front of thousands of people on stages for CreativeLive and TEDx, to adopting a child and even homeschooling our three kids while we travel the world together. It's been an amazing adventure, and I have to admit that only now have I finally begun to see that turning dreams into reality doesn't happen by chance. It's not a stroke of luck. It's a choice.

We began our photography business with no ambitions; we were "living on love" and just wanted to work at our passion while putting food on the table. But by the time our small-town wedding studio was named an official "fastest growing business," we had come to realize success never relies on being discovered for your superior talent (although I know many of you are very talented). It relies on time-proven business and marketing principles. It's not rocket science. You can do this. ■



Phillip and Eileen Blume are award-winning photographers just crazy enough to believe art can change the world. They've transformed their small-town home studio into a top brand, and now work with clients worldwide. The Blumes specialize in wedding and fashion photography, and continue to focus on what matters most to them. Their charitable projects include adoption advocacy and documentary filmmaking that benefits children living in extreme poverty. Phillip is a monthly contributor to *Shutter Magazine*, and the Blumes speak together at numerous top industry events. They have appeared on CreativeLive, and have shared their inspiring vision for more meaningful photography from the TEDx stage. Their three photography brands include a newborn studio, and they are proud founders of ComeUnity Workshops, for photographers seeking balance. They live with their children in rural Georgia.

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CHANGING PHOTOGRAPHY **G**

Photo Credit: Daniel Berehulak





Creating
**FANTASTICAL
WORLDS**

for Your Clients

with Laura Schumpert



On the night before Easter, at five years old, I remember lying in my bed so excited that I could not sleep. I was told the Easter Bunny was coming, and I was ready. I stared at an object outside that I swore was the Easter Bunny until I passed out; when I awoke, I looked outside to discover the object wasn't a magical bunny at all, but just a gasoline can.

Why tell this embarrassing childhood story? Because as adults, piece by piece we lose that speculative grasp on reality, and learn to accept the mundane rhythm of everyday life. For photographers who shoot children, it's important to remember the excitement and magic of those days.

Now that you are ready to create from a place of whimsy, we can talk technical. With a camera you can create anything you dream up, but it is more than likely going to involve compositing, and that can be intimidating. Like everything in photography, if it is photographed correctly in camera, your editing time will be simple and quick. Below are five basics you must master for compositing.



Image © Laura Schumpert



Images © Laura Schumpert

SAME LENS

This means if you photograph the background with a 200mm lens, the subject and every other element is photographed at the same focal length. This helps you put together your pieces effortlessly rather than trying to play with transform and perspective tools in Photoshop to get everything to match.

SAME POSITION

Once you start photographing, do not move. Put your camera on a tripod and do not move again. This will make everything being put together flow more easily during the editing stage.

SAME SETTINGS

Do not photograph your background at f 2.8 but your subject at f 9. If your background is soft and painterly, you want your subject to match. Look up your exif data and make sure you are photographing with intention.

USE BODY LANGUAGE AND ACTION

You want your compositing to look as realistic as possible, so if you are making an image with a child flying through the air carried by a balloon, their body language must match. Make them jump (if old enough). Get garments that flow and have movement to them. Make everything look as if they are truly being pulled through the air.

STOCK PHOTOGRAPHY IS OKAY TO USE

I get this question often: Can I use stock? Yes, but there are rules. If you use stock, pay for it. Read the licensing on the website. If you're creating for personal clients, the basic license is enough. You will need to research other license types for bigger projects to make sure you are covered. For our Peter Pan concept photo, instead of getting a stock image, I had my sister draw me a Peter Pan shadow. If you have those skills, put them to use.



1.



2.



3.

Images © Laura Schumpert



Image © Laura Schumpert

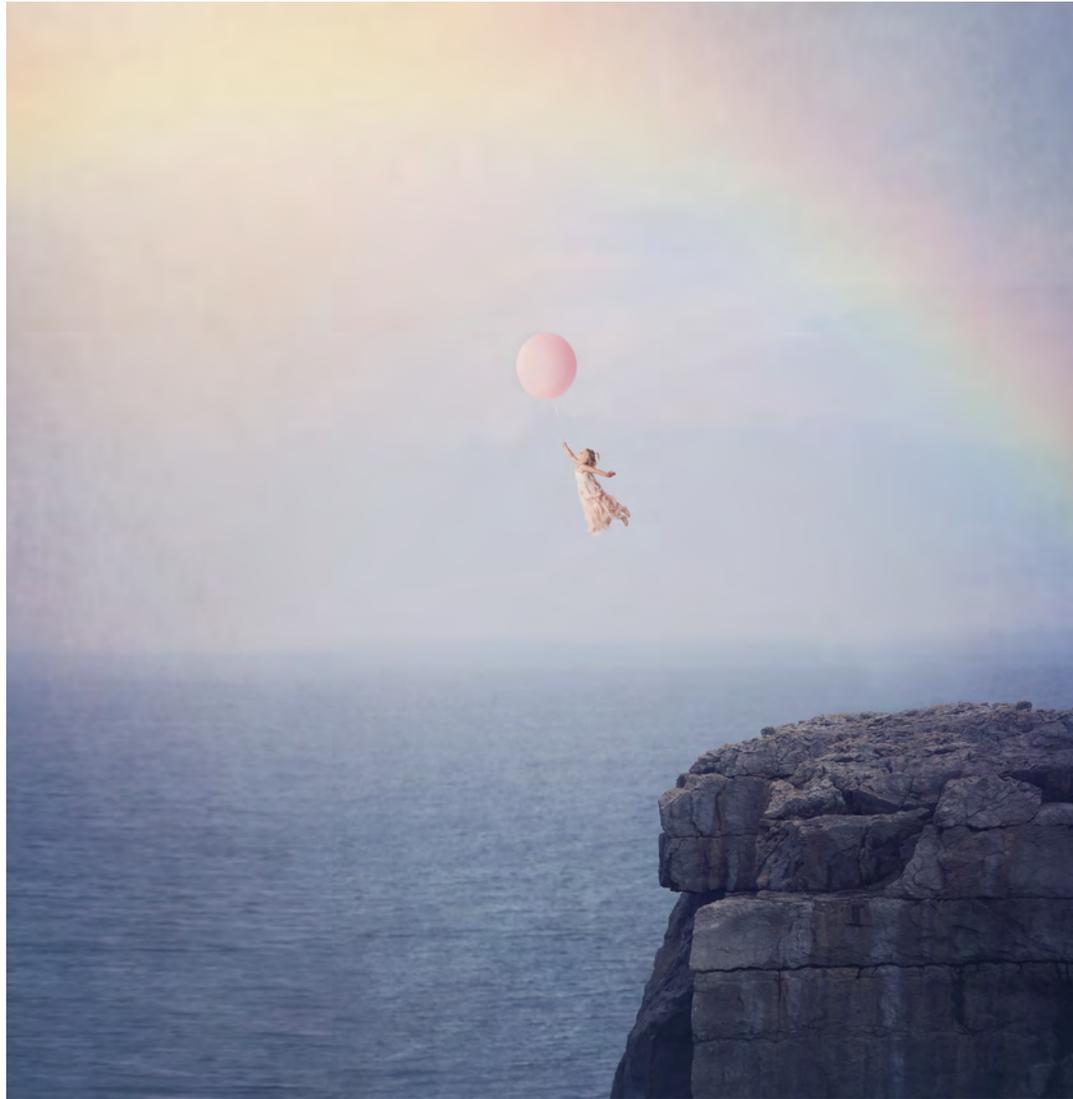


Image © Laura Schumpert



Images © Laura Schumpert

Now that we have our basic rules down, how can we sell composites? This is where the beauty of this type of imagery shines. Not only are parents going to be astonished by the one-of-a-kind art you have created starring their very own child, but the child is going to grow up imagining themselves in this magical world you have placed them in. You have already created an emotional connection (the key to selling anything) with two people and just one image.

Take it up a notch and do some planning before the shoot. If the child is very young, find out what the parents' childhood favorites were. Alice and Wonderland? Peter Pan? The song "Somewhere Over the Rainbow"? Whatever they loved in their youth, I am positive you can make imagery out of it. When they get to be two or three and start forming opinions and interests, ask the parents what they love. If a little girl is obsessed with *Thumbelina*, place her in a scene from the book. She can be perched on a branch with a songbird.

What about when they reach eight or older and are getting a bit too cool for pictures? You can still use this. We had a girl who loved the *Harry Potter* series. After we showed her our concept, she showed up in full character, robes and wands ready to go. The best part came when her mother called to tell me her daughter requested a huge print of that on her wall. No selling required. Seeing her face light up was all they needed. Parents will pay a lot of money to watch their child experience something beautiful and magical. They will have your art on their wall and in their home to cherish and start conversations with for a lifetime.

Now that we know we can sell it for all ages, we have to be profitable. Composites can't make up the entire session. Compositing, no matter how well you have photographed it, can be time intensive. It's just not feasible to create 20-plus composites. This should be an add-on to your regular sessions, which is a sure way to boost your sales. Parents need the must-have pictures for friends and family, but this piece will be so wildly different, they will not be able to live without it. I would market and sell these as wall art images, and start them at a minimum size. Do not sell the digital release to this image. Distinguish composites from the rest as the special pieces they are. Convey the idea that this is art in their home, and the digital file is too precious to sell.

Now for marketing. Just because I do not believe you should sell the digital image does not mean they should not be marketed on social media. These images get major traction because they demand attention. This boosts your social media presence and makes people remember your name and brand. You'll be seen as a photographer creating one-of-a-kind work, which will distinguish you from the masses. Make your client a small web-size digital with your watermark on it, and let them share away.



Image © Laura Schumpert



Images © Laura Schumpert



Images © Laura Schumpert

From birth to teens, this imagery will please both parents and children, and fuel your own artistic creativity. ■



Laura Schumpert is a fine-art photographer and a self-described "creative" in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. She creates imagery in multiple media, then draws from her emotions and experiences to infuse them with painterly techniques for end results that challenge reality. Laura also excels at wedding photography, cinematography and writer-illustrator projects. Her award-winning work has been shown nationwide.

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HOW TO MAKE

MONEY

WITH MATERNITY PORTRAITS

with Karen Bagley



When I started my journey in photography, I shot everything. At some point I asked a couple of ladies to be maternity models for me, in hopes of being able to photograph their newborn. During and after those sessions, I realized that maternity portraits were all the same, the typical shots in a grassy field, or holding baby shoes on their belly. There was no one even remotely near me photographing pregnant women the way I felt they should be photographed.

Being a mother of two girls, I remember all too well how it felt being pregnant and wishing someone could take my portraits in a way that would make me feel beautiful, especially when I wasn't feeling so beautiful. I didn't get pictures because I was unimpressed with what was available. That is what began my curiosity into this field. Early on, I didn't think I would make money from maternity portraits—until my husband said he thought I could photograph these women the way they want to be photographed, and could make money from it. That was all it took. I began to experiment and found that lots of women were searching for a photographer who could take maternity portraits to the next level. They wanted high fashion, gorgeous gowns, different locations and a modern feel.

Photographers tend to regard maternity photography as a side or bonus session to newborn portraits. But these sessions can meet and surpass what you expect to profit from a newborn session. To make big bucks from these sessions, though, you have to offer something better than the rest. Your experience, images and products must kill the competition's.

These woman expect the best. They are buying maternity gowns that cost as much as wedding dresses. They are having baby showers and gender reveals that cost as much as a wedding reception. It's time to capitalize on this trend. These tips could help you make money from maternity portraits.



Image © Karen Bagley

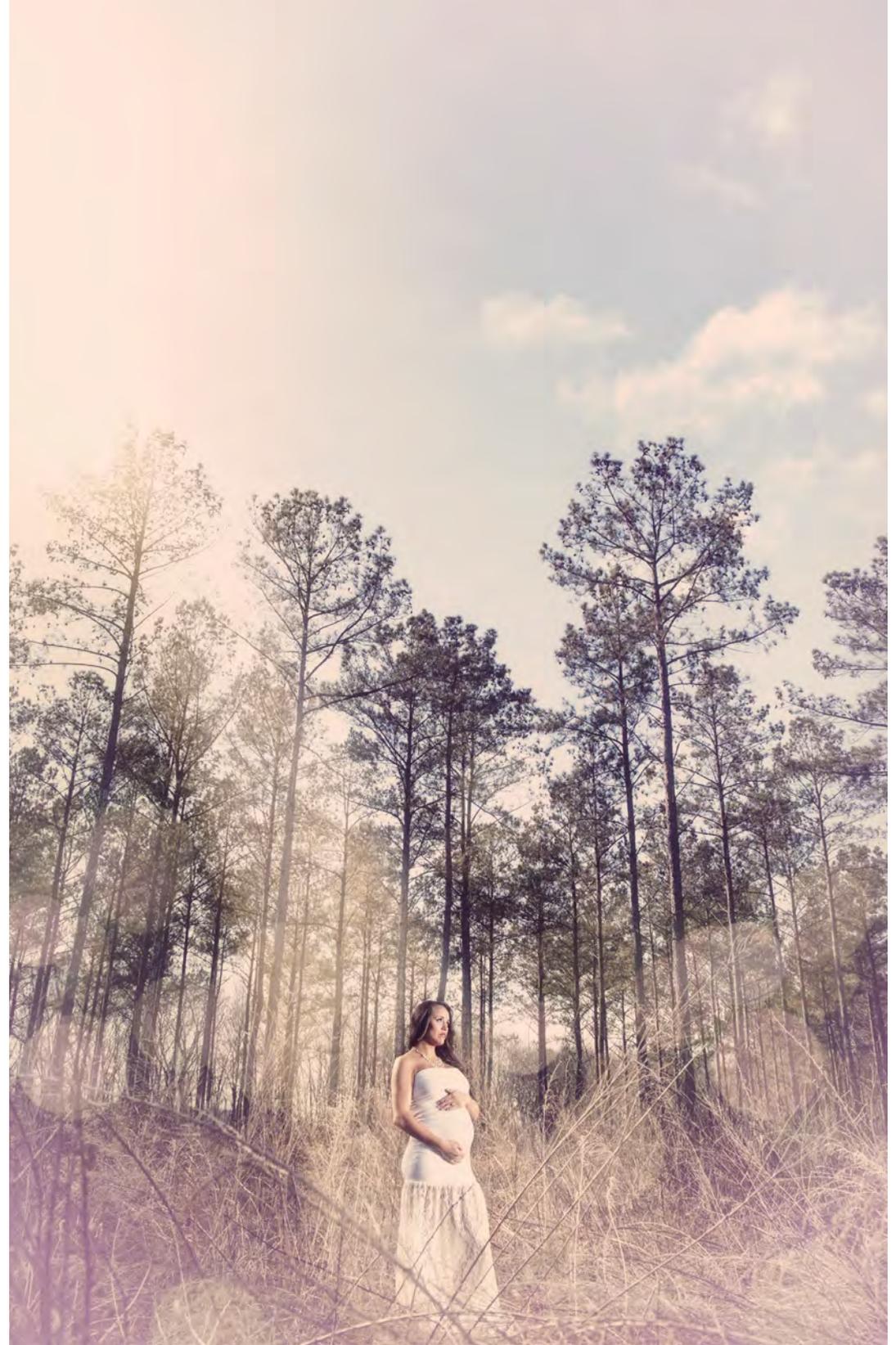


Image © Karen Bagley



Image © Karen Bagley

YOU CANNOT SELL IT IF YOU DON'T HAVE IT

If you want to book and start selling more maternity portraits, you have to be photographing them. Find yourself a few expecting mommas and create something different. I don't care if you have to borrow a friend and put a fake belly on her (I've done that). Pregnant women want to feel beautiful and sexy, and maternity portraits are in the highest demand they ever have been.

But not just any maternity portraits, fashion-forward maternity portraits. No more hands in the shape of a heart on the belly in a field with jeans and a white T-shirt, please. We have to provide something better. When you are photographing in the same spot with the same gown (if your clients are even wearing a gown), more than likely you are having a hard time making money from these sessions, if you're making money at all. Create art pieces for these women.

MARKET FOR MATERNITY

Like I said, don't just view it as a side or bonus session to newborn portraits. Promote your maternity work. You will be surprised by the reaction you get. I even have husbands calling me to book these sessions for their wives because they are excited about capturing this time in a new and unique way. When you show off your maternity work, you will find those clients who will spend to have them done right. Clients who take maternity portraits seriously are willing to spend more, and they tend to do the same when their newborn arrives. This has led me to find my optimal clients and make more money from multiple sessions.



Image © Karen Bagley





Image © Karen Bagley

KNOW WHAT YOUR CLIENTS WANT

This might be a little difficult if you are not booking many maternity sessions. Think big. Look at pregnancy content on Instagram and Facebook. The more you dig, the more you will see how serious these ladies take pregnancy. Look at all the money you could be making. These women are spending thousands on baby showers, thousands on their little one's nursery, thousands on documentation.

Each of these areas is one more opportunity to sell. I produce images for my maternity clients that they will want to buy later.



Images © Karen Bagley

For the baby shower, they want to display a large statement piece (acrylic or metal prints—my clients love these for showers). I always get some wide dramatic shots for a large print. Another huge seller for baby showers are my slideshows. I take snippets of video during our sessions, and put those together with nice music and some of their images. The first question they ask after seeing their slideshow is, “Can I have that for my baby shower?” This is easy extra money that takes only 15 to 20 minutes of your time.

For the nursery, my clients prefer canvases. I prefer less sharp edges in a newborn’s room, which is why I feel canvas works better than metal or acrylic.

To document this beautiful time, push albums. Albums are an insane selling point for my business and my number-one seller with maternity clients. If you are not offering albums to your maternity clients, that is madness. You have to change that immediately. I always shoot with some variety, be it a change of gowns, poses or locations, because I know my clients will want an album to preserve this special time. The more variety and looks you have, the bigger the album you can sell.

Do some research. You won’t know what your maternity clients want until you are booking and doing sales sessions. But you’re at a good starting point.



Images © Karen Bagley

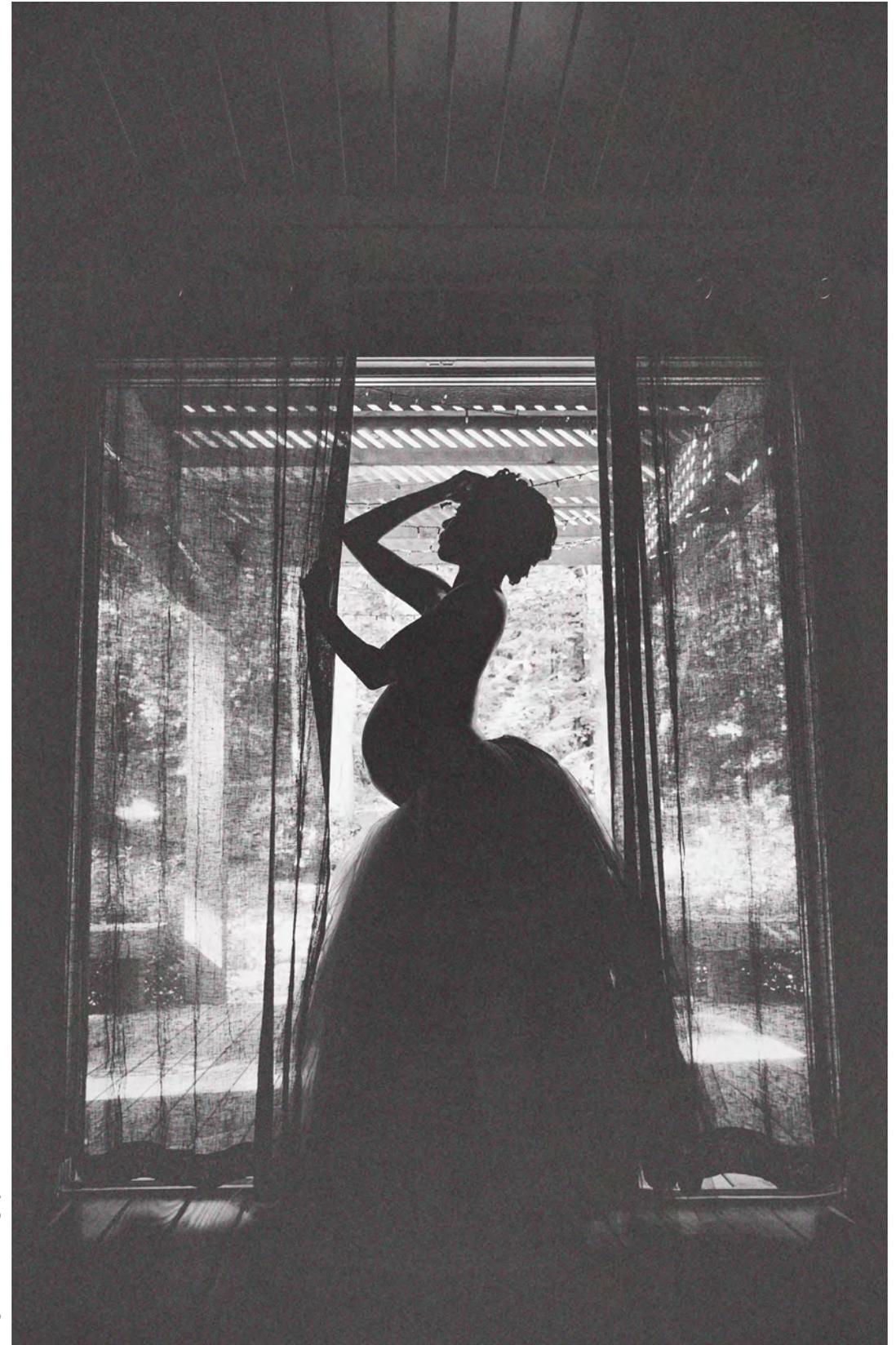


Image © Karen Bagley



Image © Karen Bagley

To sum up, understand that there is a huge need for maternity portraits. They can make you money as long as you put in the effort to make yourself stand out, market your work and carry the right products. Maternity clients will come to you. My clients come from all over, even from out of state, because they have seen what I can do and that it's different.

A large maternity portrait sale will not affect the money they spend on their newborn portraits. They represent two totally different sets of emotions and moments. Trust me: They will spend on both. ■



Karen Bagley, owner of Significant Moments Photography, is an award-winning photographer specializing in maternity and underwater portraiture. She and husband Andrew make their home outside Atlanta with their two children, Aya and Lyla. Karen travels nationwide for her clients. In addition to photographing, she loves speaking and sharing her knowledge with other photo professionals. She often donates her services to families struggling with severe illness, and believes one small act of kindness is all it takes to turn someone's life around.

significantmomentsphotography.com

SP70-200mm F/2.8 G2



Tamron SP 70-200mm F/2.8 Di VC USD G2 (Model A025) | Focal Length: 200mm Exposure: F/2.8 1/250 sec | © Thomas Kether

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NEWBORN PHOTOGRAPHY:
Starting From Scratch
with Lisa Rapp

Have you thought about becoming a newborn photographer but have no idea where to start? You don't have the fancy equipment. You don't have the funds or the endless prop supply to get off the ground. I was there too. I know that feeling of doubt, confusion and helplessness. Here are a few things that might help you start your journey into the mysterious world of newborn photography.

I always loved taking pictures of my family, but had only a simple point-and-shoot. When it finally gave out on me, I upgraded to a DSLR, my very first big-girl camera. I had no intentions of becoming a professional photographer, and a big-girl camera to me was a Canon Rebel XS (I now own the Canon 5D III). It was around this time that I ran across newborn photography and was instantly hooked. I took tons of pictures of family and friends, but had no interest in doing it for a living until I found the wonderful world of newborns.

I started searching out photographers who had a style I loved. I found an entirely new world. I joined photography forums and asked around about how to get into newborn photography. A lot of people were not willing to help. But then I found some amazingly helpful, supportive and talented people who didn't mind helping out a beginner. Thus began my newborn photography career. I jumped in feet first.

WHERE TO START

There are tons of YouTube videos and CreativeLive courses that teach how to pose newborns. I prefer to learn hands-on, so I invested in my education and took a workshop with the insanely talented Kristen Betts Mackey of Son Kissed Photography. This was one of the wisest investments I could have made. Take an in-person workshop. If it is out of your budget, watch online videos. Choose instructors who teach the style you're pursuing.

Networking is also a powerful tool. Join forums and talk with other creatives. You will learn a lot from your peers, and may just gain some lifelong friends who will support and encourage you in your journey.



Image © Lisa Rapp

NEWBORN SAFETY

Posing newborns is a delicate matter. Many magical images are actually a Photoshop illusion done by compositing. A composite is two or more images that are placed/layered/blended together in Photoshop to achieve one final image.



Images © Lisa Rapp

Newborns should never be left alone in a prop or on a surface. They should always be kept warm. If you are wrapping a newborn, keep an eye on them so they do not get too warm. It is a delicate balance and a big responsibility. You have parents' entire world in your hands. Never take that for granted. Treat this new baby as if it were your own.

If you don't have a money tree, here are a few suggestions for how to get by on a budget. Everyone wants to have the latest and greatest products, but it's hard when you are starting out.

POSING BAG

After I invested in the newborn workshop, I bought a posing bag. These things are huge and awkward to haul around if you are traveling to clients' homes, but there are options. You can also use a travel-size posing bag or a bed, ottoman, tabletop or floor. You just need to make sure your bottom surface under your posing fabric is large enough, soft enough and stable enough to support the baby. If you don't have a backdrop stand to clamp your fabric to, use two chairs to support and clamp the blankets to. You can also stack pillows up on the bed and drape the extra fabric over them. Be creative and use what you have at your disposal.



Image © Lisa Rapp



Images © Lisa Rapp

BACKDROP FABRICS

Photographers use different types of fabrics as backdrops. Take a trip to the fabric store when you are starting out. Get at least 2 yards of neutral-colored fabrics that are super stretchy. Until you start making some money to build up your inventory, you can get away with a couple of gender-neutral fabrics. A few color choices could be cream, ivory, tan or brown, and you can accent with different-colored wraps, hats or headbands with these color choices. It is all up to you how much you want to start out with or wish to invest.



Homemade sandbags

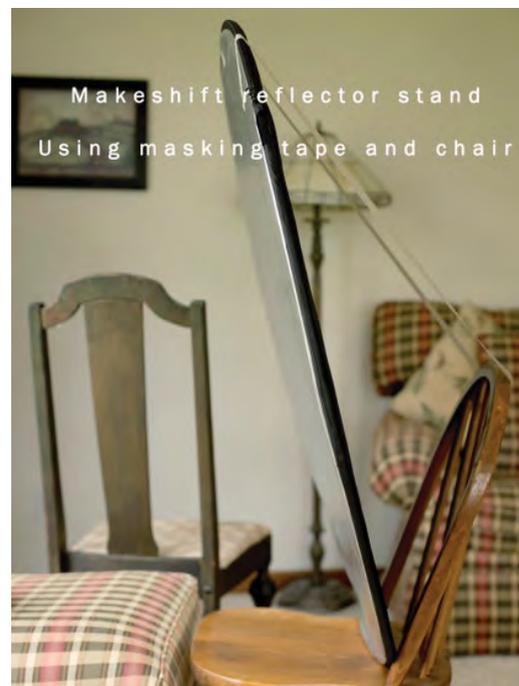
Plastic bags, sand and t-shirts



Images © Lisa Rapp

PROP HEAVEN

Bonnets, headbands, caps, bracelets, pillows, wraps, flokati rugs, bowls, buckets, dreamcatchers, little lovies, matte floors, the list goes on forever. You can buy these props or make your own. Get creative. Get out a glue gun and start crafting. When purchasing, make wise choices because it is so easy to get caught up in all the prop goodness, and buyer's remorse can set in quickly. This is where networking and communicating with other newborn photographers comes in handy. You can share vendor names and find out which ones are more economical than others. There are also many options for little posing stuffers that go under your fabric to help hold the baby in positions. You can use hand towels, washrags, burp cloths and receiving blankets for the same results.



Makeshift reflector stand
Using masking tape and chair



LET THERE BE LIGHT

When I started out, I used only natural light. I had no funds for or knowledge of studio lighting, but I was determined. The thought of using studio lights scared me so much that I was totally against them. I photographed out of my home, in my living room in front of windows. I felt like I had everything under control—that is, until storms would rain on my parade. I would then have an internal meltdown because I would have to raise my ISO on my poor little Canon Rebel. I would cancel shoots because I couldn't get enough light through my windows. I would have to schedule my sessions based on the weather forecast. I made it work because I was determined.

A big reflector offers a good way to bounce light. There are many makes and models, but if you don't want to buy one, you can make one out of white Styrofoam or put aluminum foil on a sturdy piece of cardboard. Keep in mind that if you use a white posing fabric, the fabric will also act as a reflector. It took me a while until I decided to buy my studio lighting, and the comfort of knowing I didn't have to worry about cloudy days made the decision a little easier.

When you are ready to purchase strobes and learn lighting, check out the online Illuminate course from The Milky Way. It will help you figure out what to buy and how to set it up, and teach you how to use strobes to light newborns like a pro.

WHEN SHOULD I START CHARGING?

If you are brand-new to newborn photography, doing a newborn model call is a good way to start. Get some posing experience and practice before charging clients. You never want to practice on paying clients. Build up your portfolio and get a good, solid foundation by producing consistent images, then start charging.



Image © Lisa Rapp

It has taken me many years to get to where I am in my business. Newborn posing isn't an exact science. It takes time to learn and grow. Make wise choices and be creative. You can achieve beautiful, classic images with a minimalistic approach. Practice and be patient. Chance favors the prepared mind. ■



Lisa Rapp is the head chick in charge at Little Chics Pics, which specializes in newborn portraiture. The Southern Illinois shooter has been passionately photographing newborns since 2011. She has been married for 23 years, has two boys, loves ice cream, says inappropriate things and has a serious prop addiction.

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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, *Editor-in-chief*

BEST CHILDREN'S IMAGE





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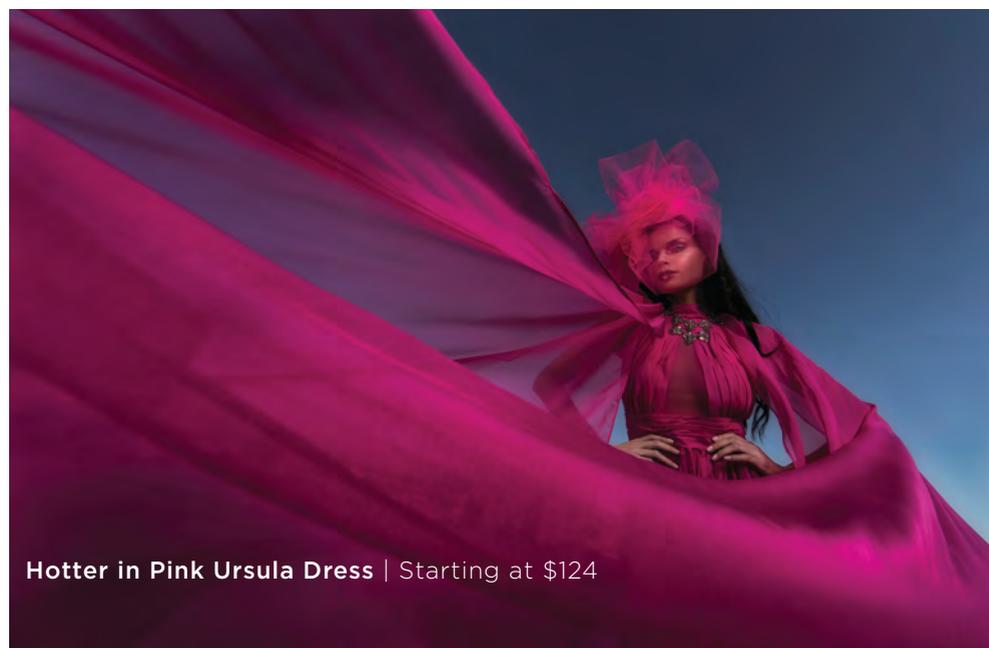
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ON1 PHOTO RAW:

A New Kind of Raw Processor

with Michael Anthony



For professional photographers, a RAW processor is an absolute necessity. But because there's so little competition, our current options are inefficient at best and completely unacceptable at worst.

After Apple discontinued support for Aperture, Lightroom became the only real option for photographers who are working with large numbers of images. While the robust options of Capture One are great, C1 does not work well for handling large numbers of files, beguiling for wedding or portrait photographers.

In December, On1 Software released its highly anticipated Photo RAW software. On1 has been hyping features of this software for a long time. It's centered around speed and integration with On1's already brilliant photo editing software. More importantly, On1 integrated its RAW browser into its develop module, which they say allows for much faster culling and organizing without having to use two separate apps.

First, let's take a look at the biggest complaints with the current industry standard, Adobe's Lightroom CC.



Image © Michael Anthony

PERFORMANCE

Lightroom CC suffers in its most crucial function, the Develop Module. While rendering 1:1 previews works well with the browsing capabilities of Lightroom, an experienced Lightroom user can edit and manipulate photos much faster than the software can keep up with. Recently, Adobe added the ability to use smart previews to develop images, which was available through unconventional methods before. They also added GPU support, but it's not full GPU support. Both of these help, but not nearly enough. On standard 20mp to 30mp files, LR experiences significant lag when moving from image to image, when applying presets and when using local adjustments. When processing over a million images a year, that extra one-second lag time adds up.

I process images on a water-cooled, overclocked 4.5GHZ quad core PC with 32gb RAM, a dedicated SSD and 1080 GPU. There is no excuse for why Lightroom cannot make use of this power. Adobe has made Premier Pro capable of using the resources of a powerful PC; it would be nice if they stopped treating Lightroom as their redheaded stepchild (no offense to redheaded stepchildren out there).

COLOR

Color is my second biggest complaint with Lightroom. Lightroom uses camera calibration profiles that are designed to normalize files photographed with different cameras. While this is a beneficial feature, the embedded camera calibration profiles are not accurate to the JPEG previews that are shown on the back of my camera after I take a photo. If you have ever wondered why a photo's color changes immediately after importing, it is because LR is applying the "Adobe Standard" color profile to your images. Changing that profile to "Camera Standard" does not give you an accurate rendition of color like it is supposed to. I have found that images on my 1DX Mark II and 5D Mark IV have much more contrast than Canon intended.

LOCAL ADJUSTMENTS / PROCESS ENGINE

Adobe's process engine was revamped in 2012, and has received incremental updates since then. Software today needs to be built and updated as frequently as our camera technology changes. The cameras in 2012 were far less advanced than the ones in 2017, but Adobe has not released a new process engine since then. The local adjustments in Lightroom still require much work to be done in Photoshop (Clone/Heal tool, I am calling you out). If the technology is available, and Adobe obviously has it, why not make it available in Lightroom? Photographers who process a massive number of images should not need to go into Photoshop just to remove a few blemishes from their subjects.

Can Photo RAW (PR) actually be the solution to replace Lightroom? Perhaps it can, but let's dive into the pros and cons.

First, a disclaimer. I am writing this article in late January 2017, right after ON1 has released a major update. PR is a work in progress, and On1 has made it very clear that it will be releasing new updates over the course of the next year. My initial use of this software has shown major potential, but, as will be discussed in a bit, the program still has a few bugs that are being squashed.

INTERFACE

The interface of PR is quite organized, and resembles On1's other software. The layout is clean and everything is organized in an easy-to-use way. It offers many different functions, so will take some getting used to until you're as efficient with it as you are in Lightroom. Do you remember opening Photoshop for the first time? PR doesn't feel that overwhelming. You can get to where you need to be very quickly.

The software opens in Browse mode. Browse mode is similar to PhotoMechanic's, which has been our studio's method of culling for a long time now. PR natively supports color tagging of images in PhotoMechanic and displaying in Photo RAW without the need to adjust settings in PhotoMechanic like you do to get the same functionality out of Lightroom.

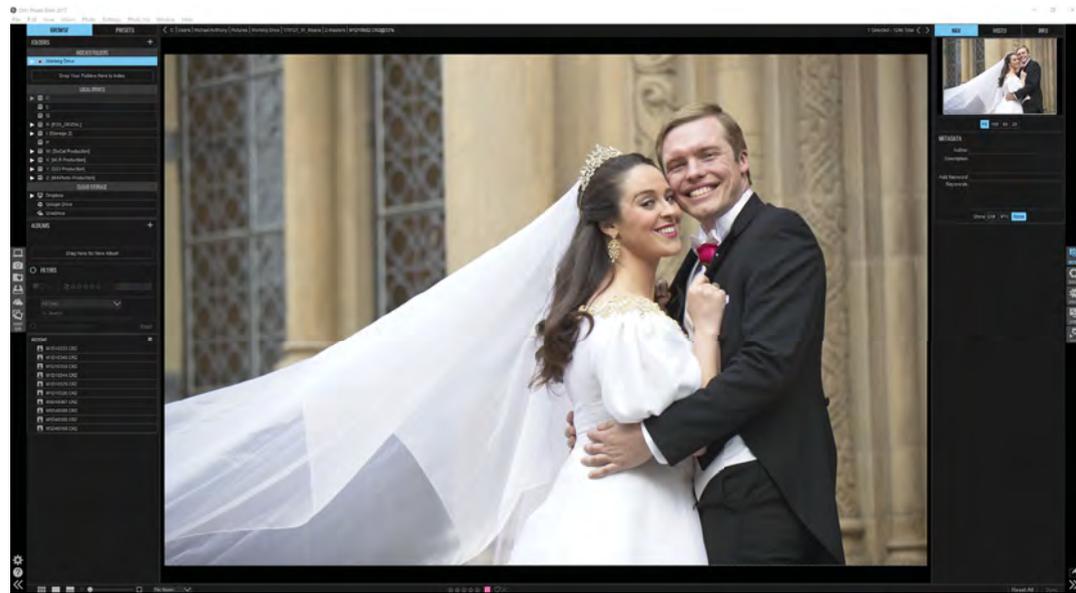
The interface is broken into five modules: Browse (similar to Library in LR), Develop, Effects (to make use of On1's other software), Layers (you heard that right) and Resize. These features are useful for the majority of photographers. It still takes three to five seconds to change between modules, but, since speed is a major focus of this software, I am sure that On1 will address this in future updates.

Getting into the develop module, one thing that I love is that the module doesn't use LR's long scrolling method to get to the tools in the interface. Instead, it uses a drawer with different options that you click on when you need them.

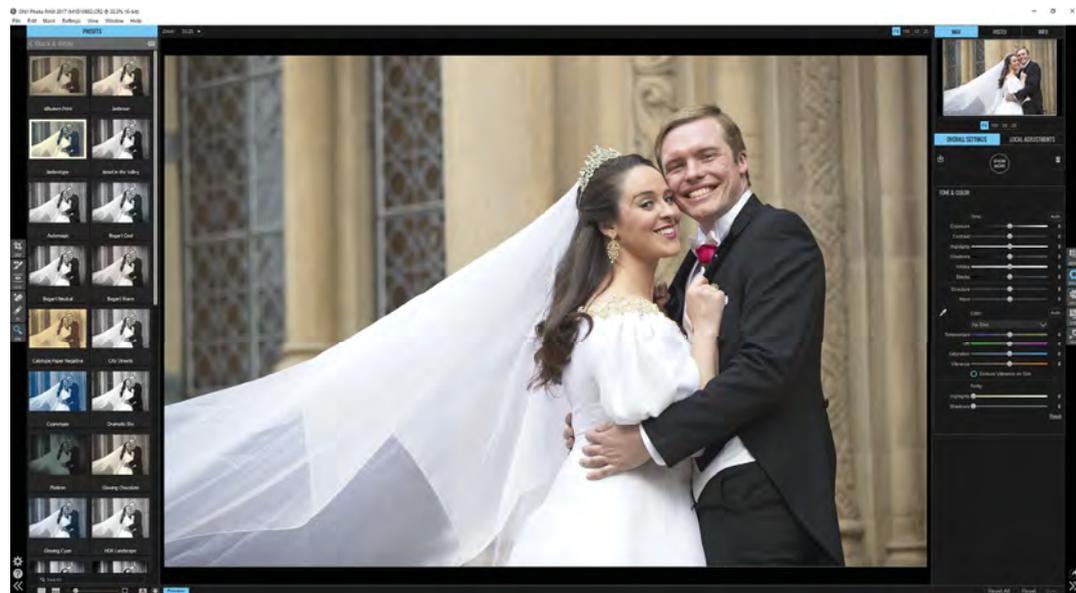
The options available as of now are: Black and White, Color Adjustments, Curves, Glow, Noise Reduction, Sharpening, Skin Retouching, Split Tone, Transform and Vignette. All of the usual tools, like cropping and local adjustments, are found on the left-hand edge of the screen, right next to presets.

Keyboard shortcuts are available as well to get you to where you need to be.

Overall, the interface for PR was well thought out, allowing you to work quickly and efficiently.



On1 Photo RAW Browse Module



On1 Photo RAW Develop Module

RAW CONVERSION ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

I found RAW Conversion to be very good with PR. I am very happy with the color renditions and the added features, such as highlight/shadow purity, excluding skin tones from vibrance edits and integrated skin retouching.

Dynamic Range was also very impressive. I am pleased with the software's ability to render colors without the need to embed a proprietary color profile. The automask feature is brilliant, and the ability to work in layers is exceptional. The foundations laid down by PR are exactly what photographers have wanted in a RAW converter for some time.

Contrast handling is very good, and it is clear that On1 spent a lot of time making sure this area of PR worked well. In terms of color adjustments, Capture One is still king, in my opinion, but the features added to PR that are not available in C1 would make this a much better solution for wedding and portrait photographers who are delivering many images.

Structure is PR's version of clarity. As with LR, structure provides a local contrast that can easily be overdone and cause halving if not used properly. I prefer LR's version of this tool (but I seldom use either).

I like On1's integrated presets and effects panel, which allows you to quickly apply filters to your images if that is your kind of thing.

PERFORMANCE ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

Performance is make or break for PR. That's because PR's only real competitor, Lightroom, suffers dearly in this category. I have to address the first selling point of this software, its speed. On1 had positioned PR to work in the Develop module with little to no lag. I see that as slightly optimistic. Images in Browse mode do in fact load significantly quicker than in Lightroom, but not quite as fast as PhotoMechanic. Images take about a quarter second to load in Browse mode and are easily navigated and tagged.

Improvement can be made in the Develop module. Like Lightroom, PR still takes two to three seconds to load each individual image. This is the largest detriment of the software that I have found. I am sure that On1 is aware of this and is looking into fixing it with future software updates, but right now, I put it on par with Lightroom.



Images © Michael Anthony



Image © Michael Anthony

SUMMING UP ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■

I was optimistic about the launch of PR because improvements need to be made for professional photographers in RAW conversion. It is clear that On1 spent a lot of time developing this software. While the software hasn't lived up to all the promises made by On1, it is still a work in progress. On1 has released a roadmap of updates to improve performance over the coming years. Now that there is serious competition in the RAW conversion space, I am sure we will see improvements at a rate that will keep up with technology.

Overall, I am pleased with the RAW conversion abilities of this software. I wish PR would have obliterated the performance of Lightroom, but that is likely asking too much from new software. On1 is listening to its users and implementing upgrades quickly. Having skin retouching, the ability to work with layers and a fast browsing solution integrated into one program will make the job of event and portrait photographers easier. It's just a matter of how quickly On1 will get the speed issues fixed so that we can make the switch from Lightroom. ■

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Michael Anthony is the owner of Michael Anthony Studios, a wedding photography studio based in Los Angeles. He has won multiple awards in international image competition for his creative use of light, storytelling and environmental portraiture. The five-member team at Michael Anthony Studios photographs around 60 weddings and over 200 portrait sessions a year.

michaelanthonystudio.com



Image © Vanessa Joy

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU **FALL BEHIND** IN YOUR BUSINESS

with **Vanessa Joy**

Everyone knows that it takes hard work to get to the top of your industry. Building a business is no joke, and the amount of work it takes to get to your desired level of success can seem overwhelming. What most people don't talk about is the fact that once you make it, you have to work just as hard to stay there.

So what happens when you've realized just a little too late that you've been falling behind? Slacking off has serious consequences. Making up for lost time can mean double the effort to bring things back to life. Here's how you can get things back on track.

BOOST YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA EFFORTS

Social media is a great tool, but it relies on momentum—and if you’ve halted that for whatever reason, it takes a lot to get it going again. Go back to the basics with your social media marketing. Concentrate on the platform where your audience spends the most time. Shooting weddings? Focus on Instagram. Families are your thing? Be more active on Facebook. Seniors are where it’s at? Then get on Snapchat.

The last thing you want to do if you’ve already found yourself with stunted growth is half-ass the comeback effort. Don’t just sign on to your social media network and haphazardly start posting without a plan. Do yourself a favor and reeducate yourself on the platform. Some things have likely changed. You’ll probably discover different ways of doing things that’ll be more effective for you.

Get into the habit of scheduling your posts. I’m a fan of Buffer because I like the format and I enjoy looking back at my analytics. Other systems, like HootSuite, Meet Edgar and Everypost, might be more up your alley. Whatever you do, plan your posts to be consistent and as highly effective as possible. You won’t see change right away, but after you build up enough momentum, you’ll start making up for lost time.



Image © Vanessa Joy



Images © Vanessa Joy





CONCENTRATE ON NETWORKING

Just like in everyday life, if you don't put effort into relationships, they tend to fall apart. The same goes for your photography business relationships. If you've fallen behind, this is one of the areas that got hurt the most. Look back at your photography contacts and touch base with them. Send a friendly note. Maybe even one that includes a Starbucks gift card to perk up their Monday. Whatever it takes to reconnect and let them know you're still there.

One of the best things to do at any point in your business is reach out to new people. I recently did this when I decided I needed to develop more relationships in the higher-end New York City wedding market. I attended a networking event full of a who's who in the wedding world, and did my best. I actually ended up ditching the people I went with to force myself to walk up to perfect strangers and start conversations.

What do you know, it worked! I made a great connection with a prominent photographer who invited me to his Instagram pod, where I'm now connected with even more amazing wedding vendors. I also was able to get a personal invitation to check out The Plaza's biggest competition, near Central Park. Nothing has paid off in dollars yet, but I know it will tenfold.

Boldly get out of your comfort zone and network with other businesses in your field. Be tactful. No one likes a cold call or spam email. Find a way to do this right, and it'll boost your reputation.

EXPERIMENT WITH NEW TACTICS

Odds are that if you've been out of it for a little while, things have changed in the marketing world. You'll find that things that were working for you previously aren't working anymore. Welcome to the wonderful world of marketing in the 21st century.

Luckily, basic marketing principles do stay the same—because, when it comes down to it, you're still dealing with people. People are subject to basic psychology, and marketing is really just tapping into that psychology to make what you offer look like what they need. Grab yourself some a marketing book if you're not familiar with this concept.

To brush up on the newest marketing tactics, I don't recommend picking up a book. By the time books are printed and distributed, half of the new marketing ideas are old news. Instead, search through business and marketing blogs, and not just from the photography world. Search Google on the social media platform you want to concentrate on. Follow social media marketing gurus like Gary Vaynerchuk.



Image © Vanessa Joy



Image © Vanessa Joy



Image © Vanessa Joy

Finally, you can't really go wrong by checking out what other successful people are doing. When I want to find new marketing ideas for the wedding world, I look at top wedding blogs, wedding dress designer Instagram accounts and the like. I look at how their audience (which is similar to mine) is reacting to their marketing efforts. I'm not saying to steal anything, just find inspiration and adapt it for your own company.

If you came to my keynote at ShutterFest this year, you know that my big takeaway was that you have to work for what you earn. If you've fallen behind, you're going to have to work hard to make up for it. Once you're where you need to be, never let yourself fall behind again. Work hard, work smart and work until you're motivated. ■

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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.

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ONE LIGHT MAGIC

with **Michael Corsentino**

This month I use the test images from my One Light Magic class I taught at ShutterFest 2017 to show you how to get the most juice out of one light. Each image was produced using only one light and a range of modifiers. This was one of my most popular classes, especially among beginners, since most of us start with one light.

Whether you're using one light or six, strobes or speedlights, the same basic principles apply. Before we dive into the sample images and the modifiers used to achieve them, we need to talk about the four basic principles of light: quantity, quality, direction and distance. Let's look at each.



QUANTITY OF LIGHT

This is the volume of artificial light you contribute to the exposure. If you want more artificial light, what do you do? Turn up the power on your strobe. What if you want less artificial light? Turn down the power on your strobe. It's really that simple. You can either control the strobe's power setting manually like I do, or, if you're shooting TTL, simply use your camera's flash exposure compensation adjustment settings, typically +/-2 to +/-3 stops depending on make and model, to find your lighting sweet spot. That's quantity of light in a nutshell.

QUALITY OF LIGHT

This is determined in large part by the modifier, and is often described with terms like soft light, hard light and specular light. Soft light creates gradual transitions between shadows and highlights. The basic rule of thumb is the larger the modifier and the closer it's placed to your subject, the softer the light. Feathering the light, a technique used to further accentuate soft light, is another useful method. Here, the subject is placed slightly behind the modifier and illuminated entirely by its falloff rather than the harsher center hot spot.

When it comes to hard light, opposites apply. Here, the transitions between shadows and highlights should be rapid and crisp. Modifiers are typically small and placed farther away from the subject. The smaller the modifier and the farther away it is from your subject, the harder the light.

DIRECTION OF LIGHT

This is the angle of light in relationship to your subject. Photography is light and shadow, so don't be afraid of shadows. They create a sense of dimension, volume, shape and drama. Imagine your subject in the center of a large clock, facing the 12 o'clock position. You, your camera and your light are also positioned at 12 o'clock, facing them. As you move the position of your light left or right around the clock's circumference, you begin to introduce shadow to the lighting pattern created on your subject. The farther to the side you place your light along the arc of that clock face, the more shadow you introduce. Starting at the 12 o'clock position, you get butterfly/Paramount light. Moving left or right 45 degrees, you're positioned for Rembrandt and loop lighting. Farther to the side to the 3 o'clock or 9 o'clock position, you're where you need to be for split light. Beyond that is where rim lights are positioned, typically somewhere between 1 to 2 o'clock or 10 to 11 o'clock. I'm providing two clock positions because, if you imagine a dividing line separating the right and left half of the clock face, they each work exactly the same way, producing the same effects. They can be used alone or combined to create more layered lighting.

DISTANCE OF LIGHT

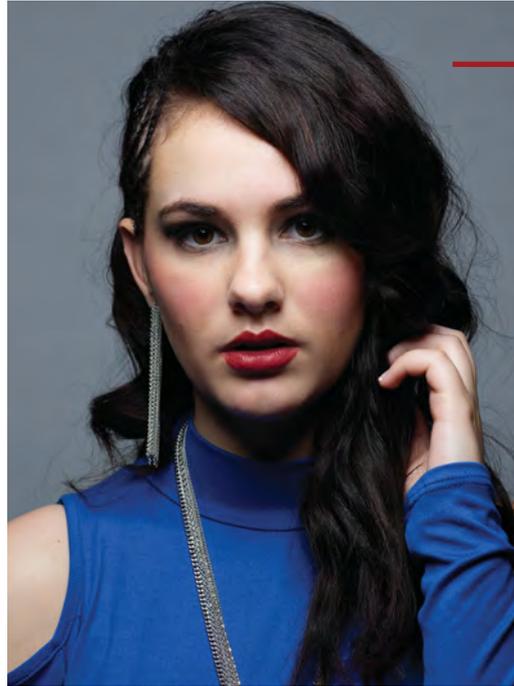
This is the distance of the light source from the subject. Distance plays a key role in hard and soft light. The sun is a massive light source, but it's 93 million miles away. Without cloud cover to broaden and soften it, it's a point light source. This is why the sun isn't always dependable. The perceived size of a given light source in relationship to the subject is also relevant here. The perceived size (and effect) of a 2x2 softbox placed 15 feet from a subject is large. Take that same 2x2 softbox and place it 10 feet from the subject, and its perceived size becomes very small. This is important because, as we've learned with quality of light, size matters, both real and perceived.

For the class, I highlighted three of the light modifiers I find most useful for a wide range of work: Mola Demi Beauty Dish, Elinchrom 74-inch Litemotiv Indirect Octa and Elinchrom 39-inch Deep Octa, along with their respective diffusion panels. I also showed examples of how useful grids can be for those working in tight spaces.



I've removed the diffusion sock from the front face of the beauty dish, raised it and moved it approximately 10 feet from the model and backdrop. This creates a harder, specular light with broader coverage, allowing us to illuminate the entire figure. When I'm doing this kind of lighting, I add a second light with a vertically oriented strip box below the beauty dish to create even head-to-toe illumination. I wanted to demonstrate that it is possible to do well with just one light, and the beauty dish is the perfect modifier for it.

MODIFIER: BEAUTY DISH

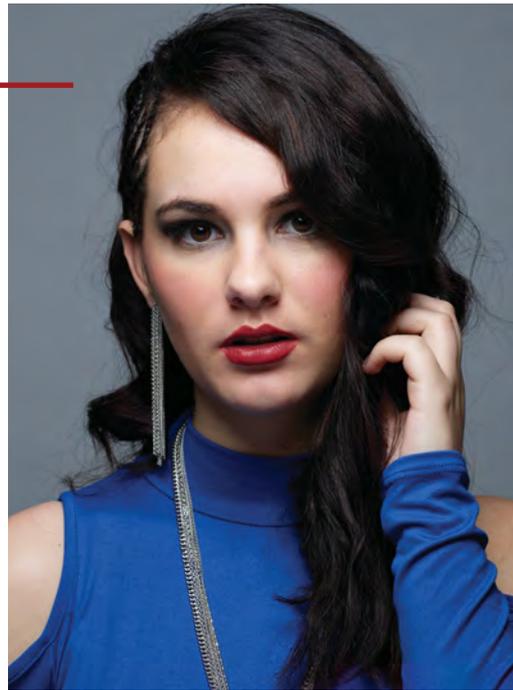


This first image uses a beauty dish for classic Paramount light. Note the signature thin shadow below the model's nose. The beauty dish, a Mola Demi Softlight, is in the 12 o'clock position, overhead and angled approximately 45 degrees down toward the model. The photographer's position is directly in front of and facing the model. I'm using a diffusion sock on the front of the beauty dish to help soften hotspots. The backdrop appears gray even though it's pure white. This is because both the model and the beauty dish are far enough away from the backdrop to allow it to fall to a darker tone.

MODIFIER: BEAUTY DISH

To open the shadows cast by the beauty dish under the model's neck and eye sockets, I've added a white fill reflector from below, just outside the frame. This is a classic over-and-under lighting pattern known as clamshell.

MODIFIER: BEAUTY DISH



Images © Michael Corsentino

In this last image in the series, everything remains constant, except the entire arrangement of model, light and beauty dish has been moved much closer to the background, thereby taking the backdrop from dark to light gray, using the same white backdrop.

MODIFIER: BEAUTY DISH

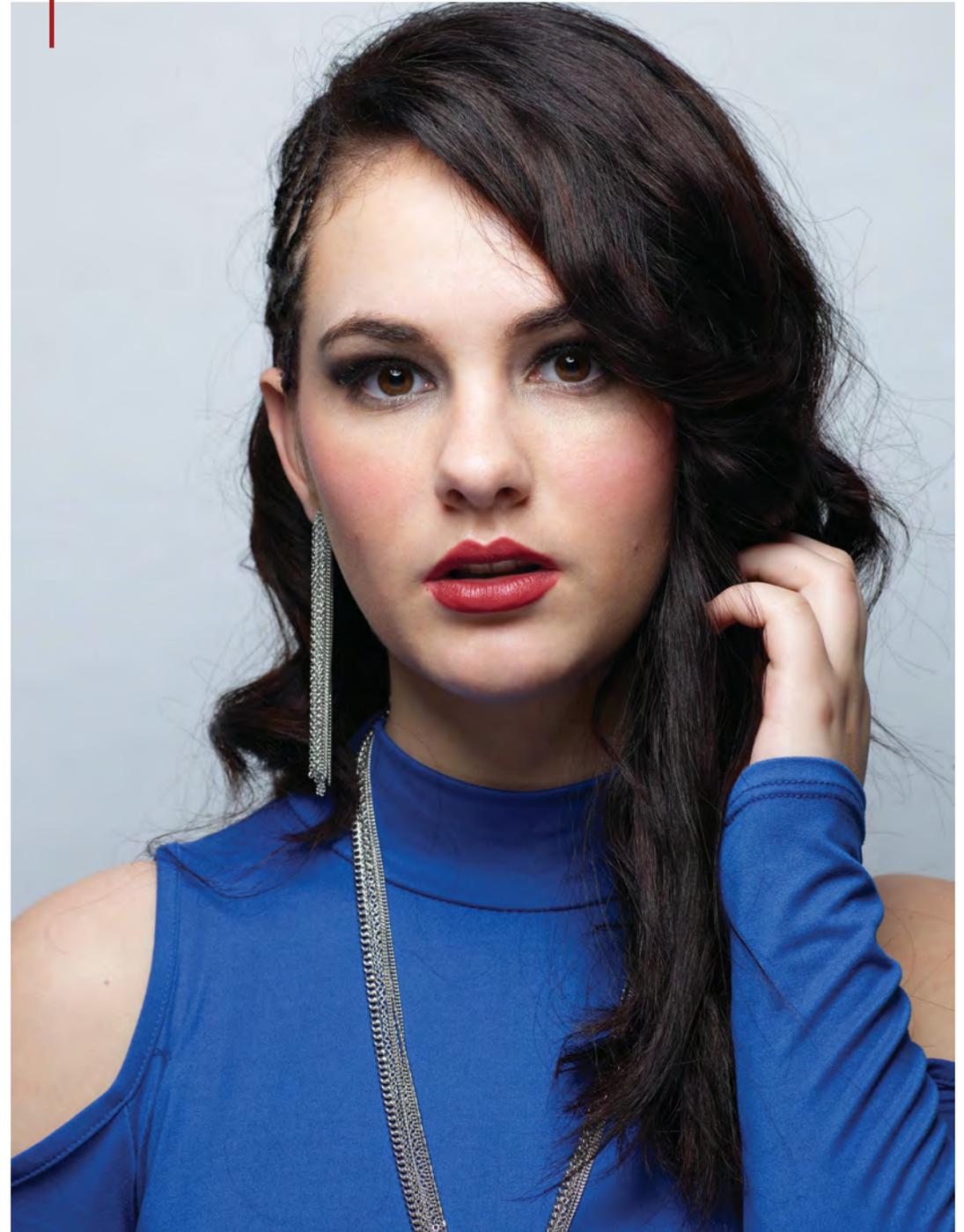
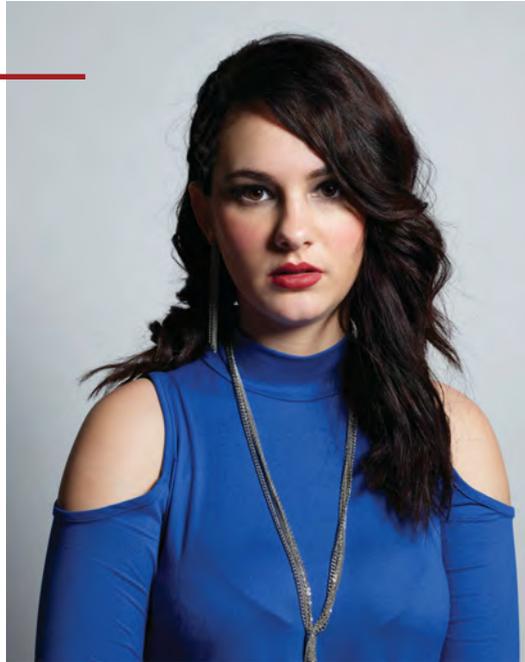


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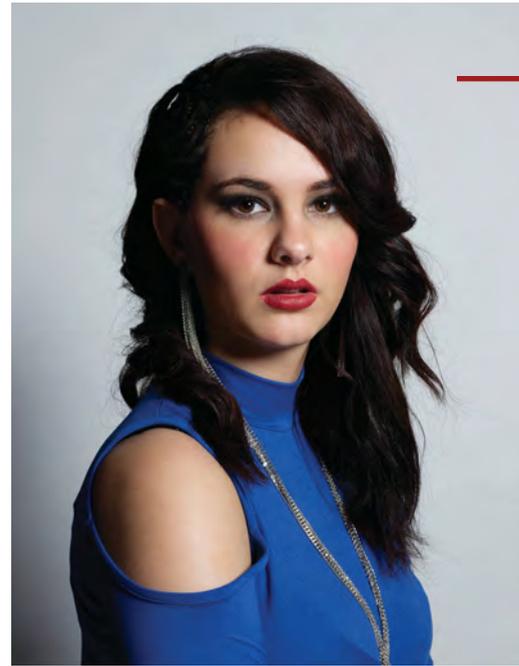
DIRECTION

In this series of images, we're still using the same strobe and beauty dish, but I've moved them from the 12 o'clock position to 45 degrees camera right. This is where you find loop and Rembrandt light. It gives the light direction, which introduces shadows that create a sense of dimension and drama that we didn't have with our previous flat lighting.

MODIFIER: BEAUTY DISH

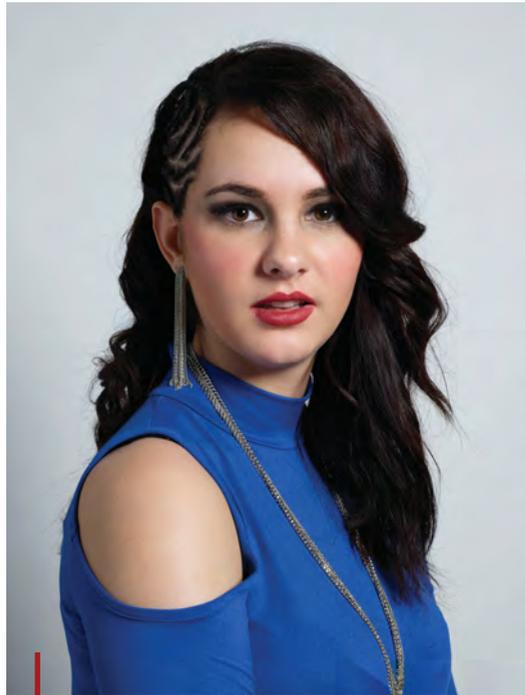


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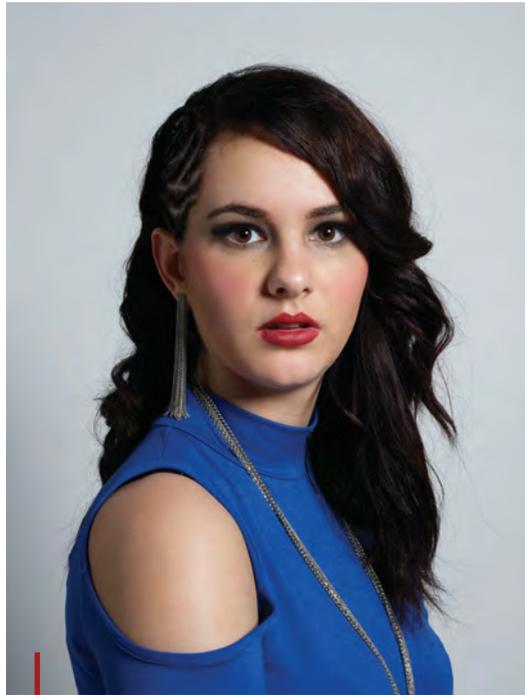


Just as light can be added with a reflector, it can also be removed with a subtraction panel. We've replaced the reflector with a large black subtraction panel. Notice how much darker the shadowed side of the face is.

MODIFIER: BEAUTY DISH

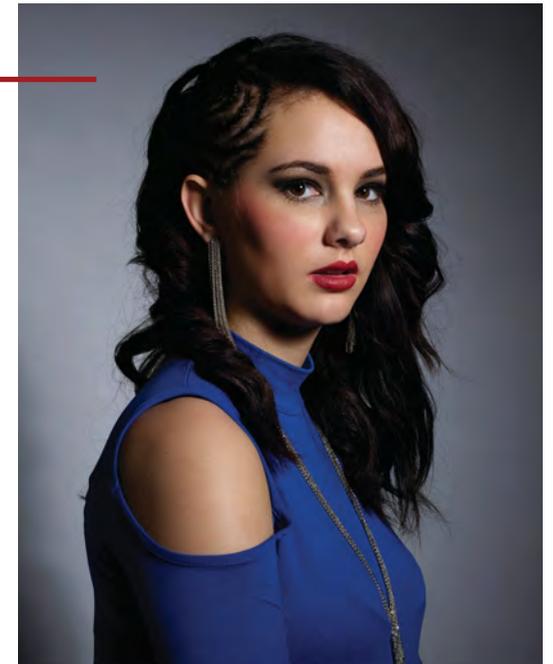


Images © Michael Corsentino



In this last image from the series, I've inserted a 20-degree grid spot into the front of the beauty dish. This channeled the light into a much tighter beam, greatly reducing the amount of light falling onto the background.

MODIFIER: BEAUTY DISH



A white fill card has been added camera left, dramatically opening up the shadowed side of the model's face and completely changing the feeling of the image.

MODIFIER: BEAUTY DISH

In this image, you can see that by moving the fill card farther from the model and keylight, the shadows get slightly darker and more interesting but retain enough fill light and shadow detail.

MODIFIER: BEAUTY DISH

CREATING SOFT LIGHT



In this series of images, I demonstrate how to create soft light with just one light. I'm using a large octabank to modify the light, as close to the model as I can get without it being in the picture. The Elinchrom 74-inch Litemotiv Indirect is large enough to create exceptionally soft results. Its indirect design means the strobe faces in toward the back of the modifier rather than out toward the subject. This further reduces the center hotspot and creates an even softer light. If you have the opportunity to use an indirectly orientated modifier, I recommend it. To complete the effect, I've placed the model slightly behind the octabank and illuminated her using only the light from the back edge of the modifier and beyond. This is called feathering. It's where the softest light lives.

MODIFIER: 74" INDIRECT OCTA



Adjusting the distance between the model and back edge of the modifier allows you to adjust the feathering. The model has been moved closer to the modifier, resulting in a brighter and slightly less feathered light than the first image in this series.

MODIFIER: 74" INDIRECT OCTA



In the third and last image from this series, I demonstrate how to control the amount of illumination the backdrop receives by varying the distance of the light (and subject) from it. By simply moving the model and strobe closer to the backdrop, I illuminate both with one light, creating a brighter, more high-key effect.

MODIFIER: 74" INDIRECT OCTA

BACKGROUND ILLUMINATION



Image © Michael Corsentino

In this series, I demonstrate how to turn a white backdrop into a black background or any shade of gray in between. By using just one light and a grid positioned at the correct angle with respect to the background, it's easy. In this first step, imagine our light modifier doesn't have a grid on it, therefore spilling light across the backdrop and creating a lovely dove-gray color cast.

MODIFIER: 39" OCTA

I've added a 30-degree Lighttools EZ Pop Soft Egg Crate grid to the face of the 39-inch Deep Octa, restricting the majority of the light to the model and completely altering the color of the backdrop, taking it from dove gray to a black/dark gray graduated backdrop.

MODIFIER: 39" OCTA



In the third image, I've added a large white reflector camera right, opposite the keylight, to add a little to the shadowed side of the model.

MODIFIER: 39" OCTA



Images © Michael Corsentino



Image © Michael Corsetino

By simply adjusting the angle of the octa and grid farther away from the background, we've taken it all the way from white to black without moving our light stand. This is a very useful technique when you're working in a confined space and need options.

MODIFIER: 39" OCTA

These pictures tell the complete story. I've categorized each set of images by the light modifier used to create them, and included captions for each. I'd love to hear from you. Hit me up on the ShutterFest Facebook page with your questions. ■



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Michael Corsetino is an Orlando, Florida-based editorial fashion and portrait photographer. In addition to his busy shooting schedule, Michael is a passionate educator, teaching workshops domestically and internationally. He is an author of two books, writes a monthly lighting column for *Shutter Magazine* and is a regular contributor to *Photoshop User* magazine and *JointheBreed.com*.

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BUILDING BLOCKS

THE FIRST STEPS TO BUILDING YOUR BUSINESS

with **Skip Cohen**

I want to apply this month's theme of children to your business. Whether you're a new artist just starting out or a veteran jump-starting an established business by adding a new service/specialty, you've got to grow your brand and skillset one step at a time. Babies learn to crawl before they can walk, and business works in a similar way.

Many of you are still in maternity mode, building confidence and your skills before giving birth to that new "baby." For this month's article, let's assume you've built a strong enough skillset and confidence level to give birth. The new business is out there, but the challenge is knowing what to do next.





SETTING UP YOUR BUSINESS

Just like setting up the baby's room, you've got to set up your business.

So many new artists get hung up on thinking they need a studio or office. The truth is, you've chosen a career path that can take you anywhere you want to go. While having a studio is always the ultimate dream, you don't need it to get started. Establish your business through great images, a good-looking website and an active blog to build readership/followers. Your cash flow is limited, so plan to spend your money wisely.

- ☛ One idea I heard recently from an attendee at ShutterFest was sharing a studio. She's been sharing a studio with three other photographers. She focused on building up her business first, and is now ready to go solo with her own location.
- ☛ Let's talk about your URL. I believe in using your name to establish brand recognition. I know it's not always possible, but you want people to easily remember you and be able to find you on the Internet. Stay away from clever or not-so-clever names that describe your business. If you can work your name into your cyber address, you'll make it easier for clients to recall.
- ☛ Your website is about what you sell, and a blog is about what's in your heart. You need both. Remember, women make 98 percent of decisions to hire a photographer in the portrait/social categories, so share content that's of interest to Mom.

- ☛ In your galleries, show only your very best images. Every image should be the only image you'd need to get hired.
- ☛ Get yourself a business checking account, business cards, stationery, etc.
- ☛ There are two professionals you need in your network even though you might not need their help immediately: an attorney and an accountant. After all, you wouldn't have a new baby without a pediatrician.
- ☛ Pricing is one of the biggest reasons so many artists spend their life eating macaroni and cheese. As Sal Cincotta once said, nothing can screw up your business more than bad pricing.

- Pay attention to all your costs.
- Look at your competitors' pricing from the perspective of giving your clients more, not charging less.
- Offer a range of products/services, including albums, prints, canvas wraps and slideshows. Stuck on what to offer? Talk with your lab.
- Build your pricing structure in packages. It's fine to have à la carte prices, but make sure they're high enough so clients always move toward a set of products.

BUILDING BRAND AWARENESS

Let's talk about brand awareness. You've got the "baby's room" ready to go. Now it's time to make a spectacular birth announcement. This is the start of your marketing program. Unlike with a birth announcement, you can't just do one thing.

- ☛ I'm a big fan of direct mail and an oversize postcard to get through the noise your target audience deals with every day. Also consider a partner or two. Partners can be other businesses with the same consumer target or other photographers with complementary skillsets.
- ☛ Get involved in your community. People like buying products from people they perceive as giving back. Don't be a taker. Take part in fund-raising efforts for nonprofits. Be active in the school system. Use your blog to talk about upcoming and past community events.
- ☛ Own your zip code. Start pounding the pavement and introduce yourself to every business within a 2- to 3-mile radius of your base. Don't get hung up on your specialty if it's unrelated to their business. A wedding photographer could walk into a real estate office and make this introduction: "My main business is wedding photography, but I'm active in the professional photography community. I'm happy to help you with any photographic needs you might have at any time."
- ☛ Use your blog to build relevant content that ties into things going on in the community. Announcements about fund-raisers not only show your involvement but help spread the word for organizers.
- ☛ Cross-promote with other vendors. Set up a program with a florist for something special when they refer a client your way, and vice versa.
- ☛ Create third-party relationships. Design a gift certificate for a discount or free sitting, and give it to a Realtor. Each time the Realtor sells a home, that certificate goes in the welcome basket for the new homeowner. You're offering something special without undermining your pricing structure since the gift is from the agent to the client. For more on this idea, visit Bryan Caporicci's blog, www.sproutingphotographer.com, and search for "Doug Box."
- ☛ Do an open house. You don't have to have a studio to do an open house or a gallery opening. Just pick a location conducive to entertaining, like a hotel lobby or restaurant. Design it like a wine and cheese party at a small gallery opening.
- ☛ Build relationships with local opinion leaders, including publishers, writers and editors of newspapers and magazines.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Whether you're a one-person business or you have a small staff, you need a customer service department. It's about the new baby in the house who's going to start crawling soon. Customer service is the equivalent of keeping an eye on the toddler, capping electrical sockets and protecting the child from other household dangers.

Here are a few customer service essentials.

- ☛ Be accessible. If you're working out of your home, I understand why you might not want to give an address, but give people a phone number, URL and email address.
- ☛ Respond quickly. When you're contacted by a client, it means they're interested in more information. Stay away from "Comcast syndrome." Don't make them wait for a response.
- ☛ Handle problems quickly and never hide from an upset client. Set the tone with your very first words: "I understand you're not happy. How can I help?"
- ☛ If you're going to have a few concrete policies, share them in your final meeting before a contract is signed or a sitting is scheduled. Just don't word your policies so harshly that they'd scare away an IRS auditor.



The first five years of a child's life are the most important to brain development. Similarly, the first six months of your new business or jumpstart are critical.

Along the way, you've got opportunities to grow your business, and, as the "child" grows, so should your skillset. You're in a field where you can never stop learning, whether it's expanding your technique or learning new technology.

Jerry Ghionis once said that the way we start in business is backward. We should all start out as second shooters and grow our skillset as artists. Then, after a couple of years, we're ready to focus on everything it takes to run a business. Instead, we get our gear, start learning and shooting, and try to figure out how to do business.

Pay attention to that new baby of yours. When there's a challenge, in the same way you'd take a child to the doctor, seek professional help for your business. There are lots of us out here willing to help. New babies and businesses don't take off right after delivery.

Take your time. Build your skillset. Build your relationships. Don't rush success, and stay humble and kind. ■



Skip Cohen is president and founder of Marketing Essentials International, a consulting firm specializing in projects dedicated to photographic education, marketing and social media support across a variety of marketing and business platforms. He founded SkipCohenUniversity.com in January 2013. He's been actively involved in the photo industry his entire career, and previously served as president of Rangefinder/WPPI and Hasselblad USA. He has coauthored six books on photography and is involved in several popular podcasts, including *Weekend Wisdom*.
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Sue Bryce creates her own natural light Profoto B1



"I started seeing studio lights the way I see, use and master natural light. I bounce and zig-zag it the same way I do with natural light. The B1 is extraordinary, and it has the ability to dial down to low, soft light with big modifiers so I can create the exact same daylight I have been working with for the last 27 years. I can shoot at any time of the day and still control the light."

- Sue Bryce

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