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PHOTOSHOP APPLYING MAKEUP

WITH DAMIAN BATTINELLI



EYEBROWS



BY DAMIAN BATTINELLI

Let me begin by saying I'm not a makeup artist (MUA)! But I have studied how artists apply makeup through simple Internet searches. I've watched countless videos and studied diagrams by leading makeup companies. This obviously does not qualify me as a MUA. What it has done is given me better insight into when I need to retouch someone's face.

These simple techniques will allow you to be creative on a fresh, makeup-free face, or touch up existing makeup. The areas we'll touch on can be seen in Diagram 1. We'll start with the eyebrows and work down the face. For this example, we'll be creating smoky eyes with rosy cheeks and lips. My model, Lianna, showed up with foundation already applied. I also retouched her skin. (Check out my article on retouching in the December issue.)

Diagram 1

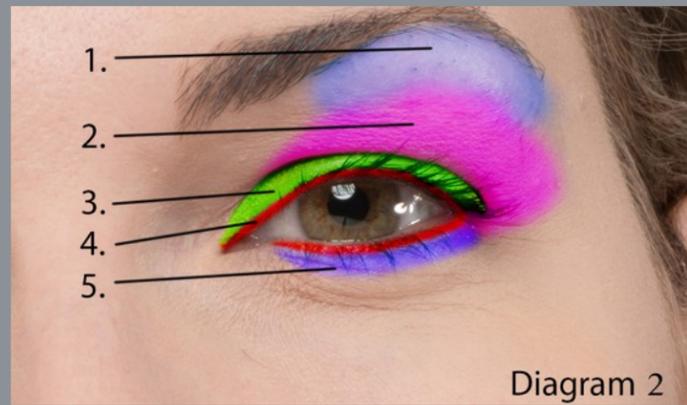


Most people need a little help with their eyebrows. I always fill in the bare areas and clean up any stray hairs. This provides a uniformed look and removes distractions. With my Wacom tablet, I can fill in bare spots by brushing in new hairs to match the thickness and length of the existing hairs.

Create a separate layer by clicking on the Create a New Layer icon at the bottom of your Layers Panel. Select the new layer. With the Brush tool selected, hold down Alt/Option to bring up the Eye Dropper tool. Select the color to best brush in the bare spots by clicking on the color of the local hairs. Now brush in hairs to match. A Wacom tablet allows me to create realistic hairs because I can set the strokes to look tapered by adjusting the brush settings in my brush panel. Finally, use the Spot Healing Brush Tool set to 0% hardness and a size slightly larger than the hair thickness. Brush over any stray, distracting hairs that are sticking out of the natural brow line.

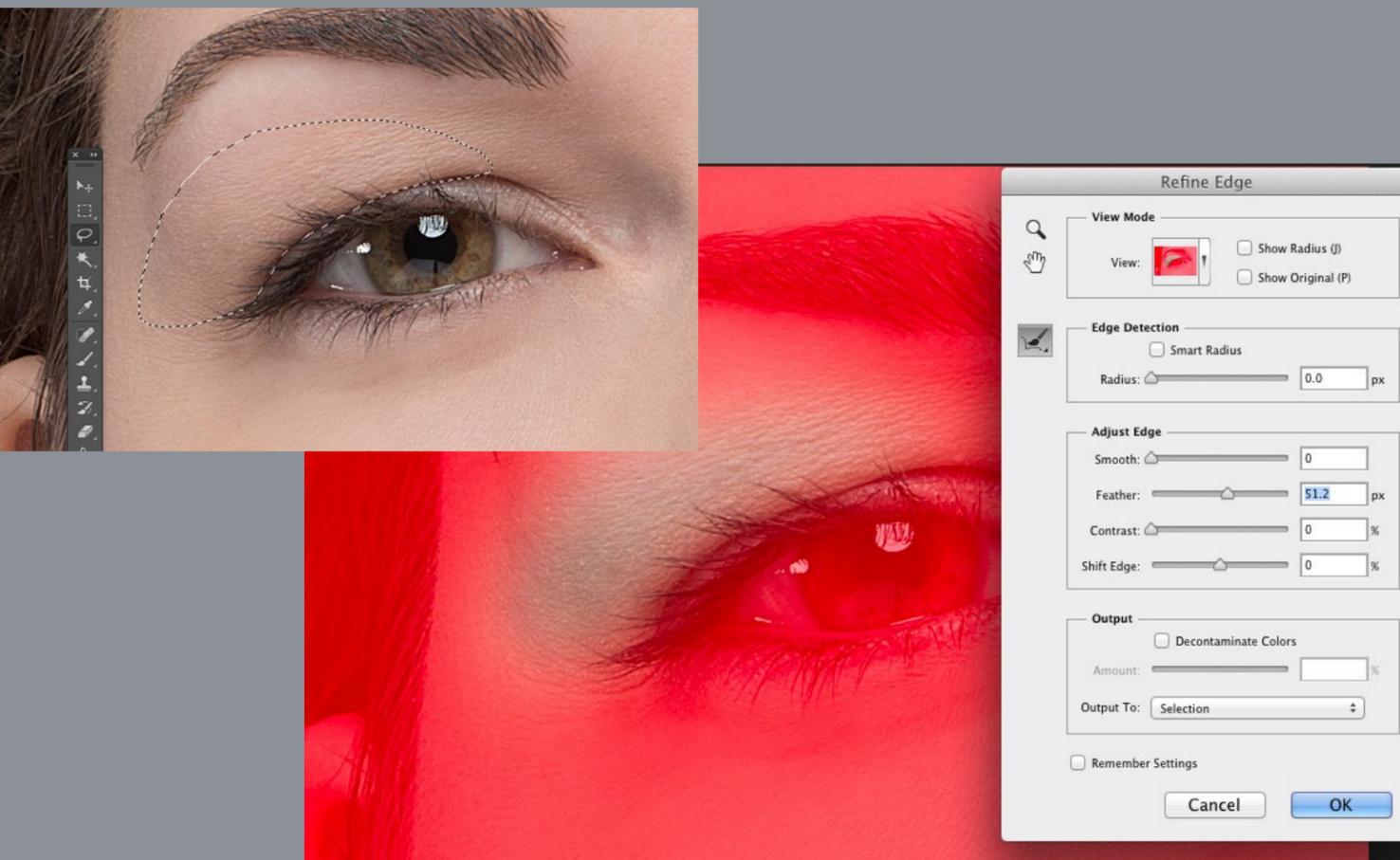
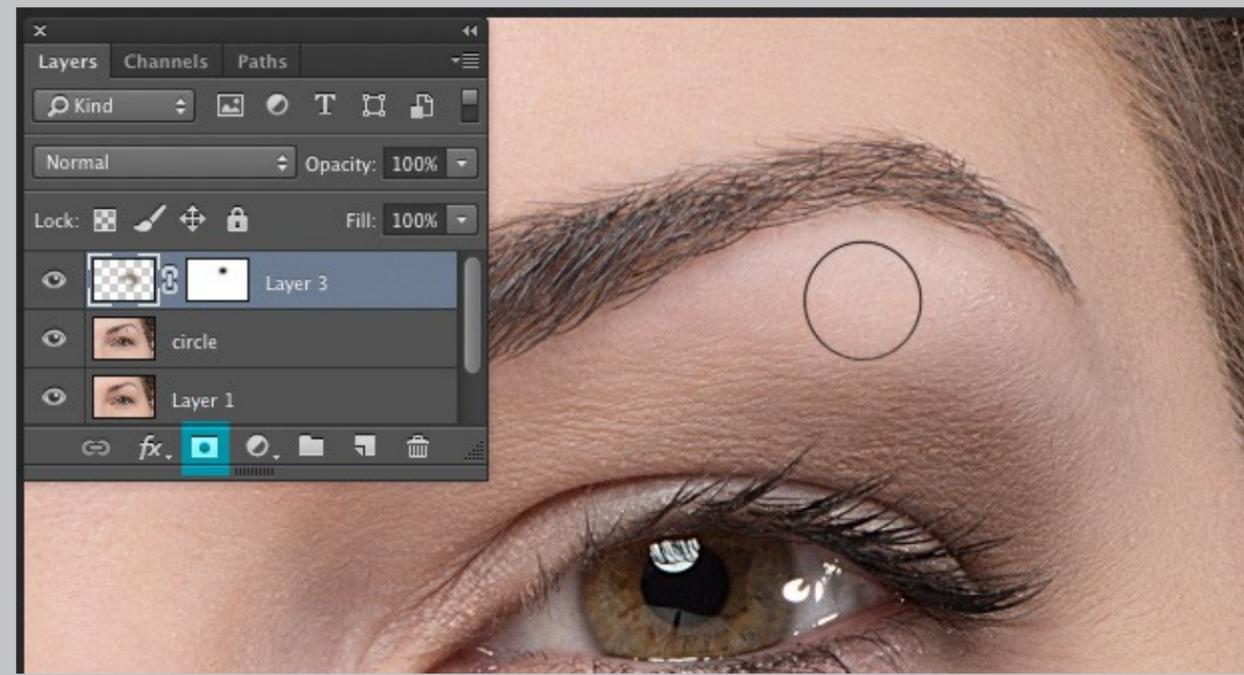
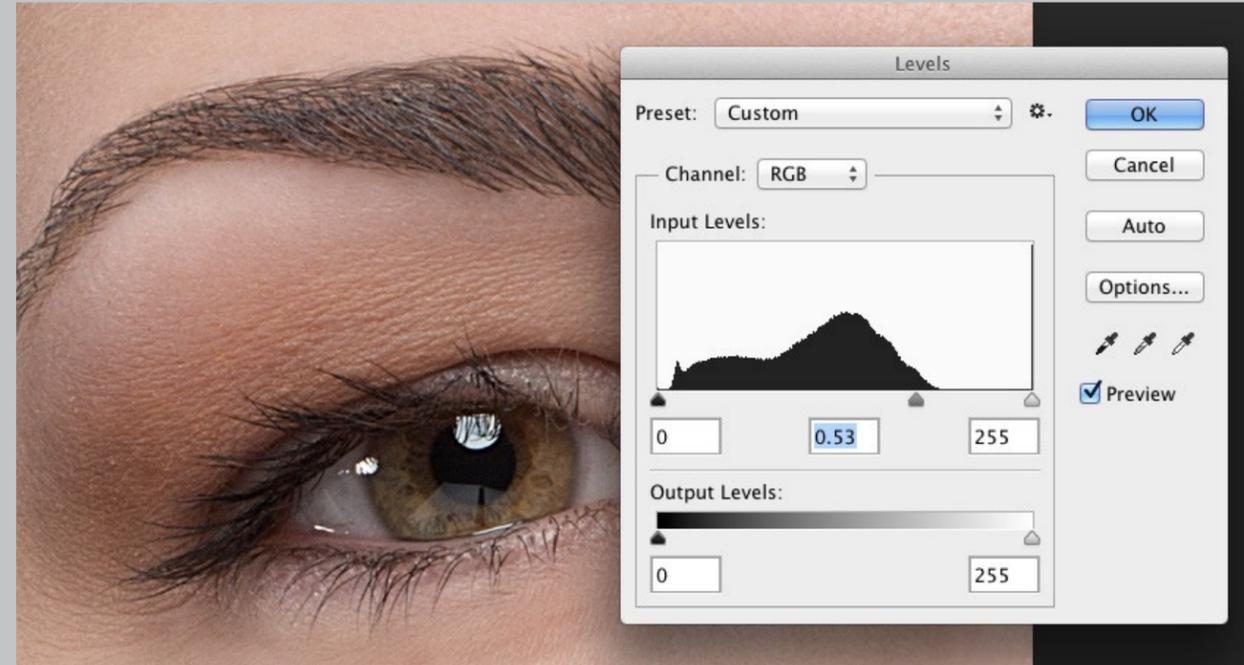


EYES



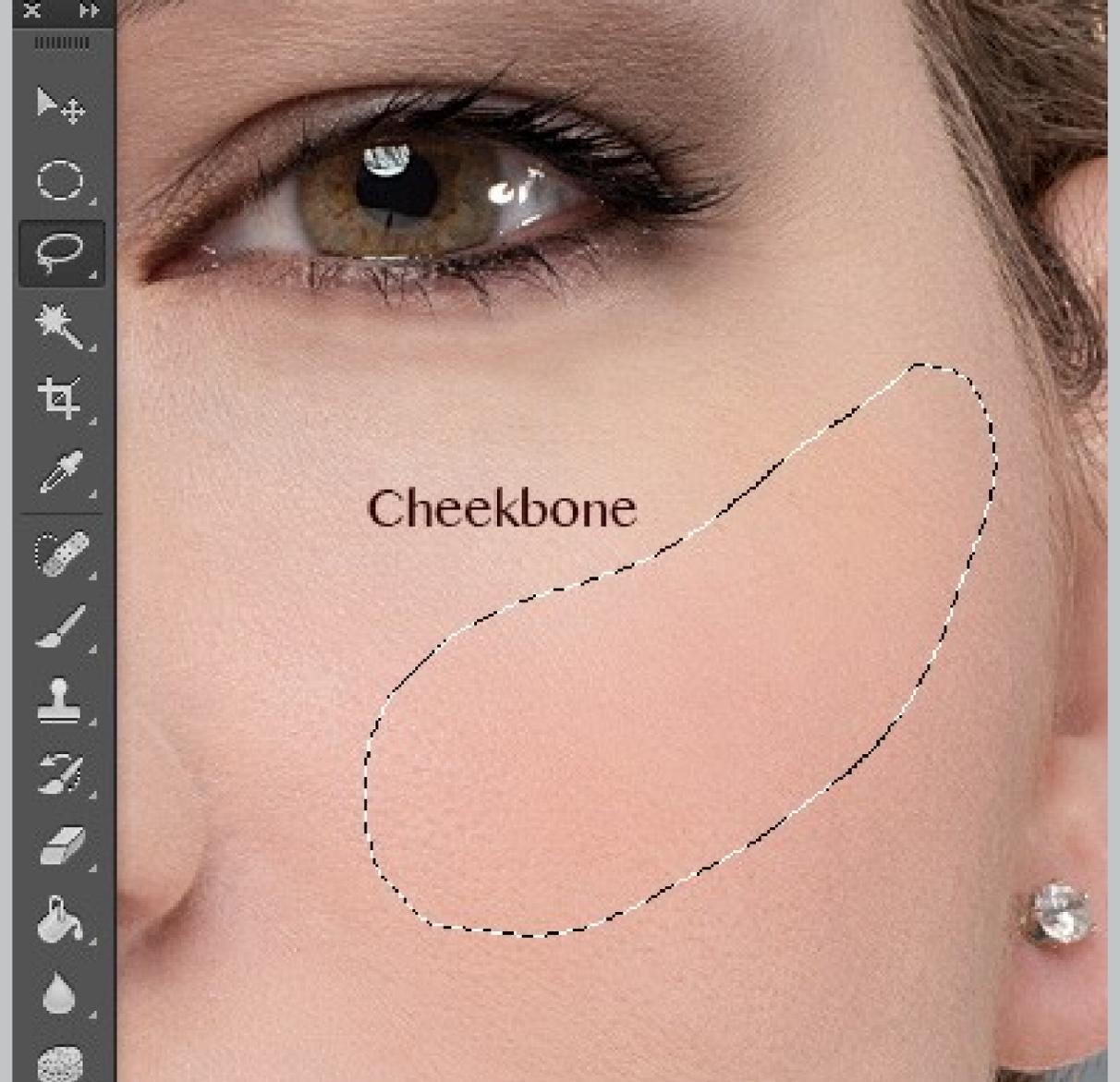
Following Diagram 2, make your selections one at a time. I tend to start with area #2. Using the Lasso tool, select around the eye in the area where eye shadow would typically be seen. Don't worry about selecting too much. Select an area that, when feathered, will look natural. This is where you'll now create a shadowed look. Typically, MUAs blend out or feather eye shadow. We're going to create that look using the Refine Edge option located in Menu > Select > Refine Edge. The goal is to create a nice feathered edge to replicate being brushed on. Change your view mode to Overlay so you can watch where the effect will happen. Drag the Feather slider to the right until you're happy. Click OK.

With your selection made, create a new layer with that selection by pressing Alt/Option J. Select this new layer and go to Menu > Image > Adjustments > Levels. Make sure the Preview box is checked so you can watch your adjustment as it happens. Adjust the black slider under Input Levels by dragging it to the right. You'll be able to watch the layer become darker, and stop when you're happy. Now you'll want to clean up the feathered edges by adding a Layer Mask by clicking the icon in your Layers Panel. While your mask is selected, choose the Brush tool, select the color black and brush out the excess.



One thing you'll notice is that the layer will not only become darker, but more saturated. If you'd like, go to Menu > Image > Adjustments > Hue/Saturation. Leaving the mode on Master, drag the Saturation slider to the left to desaturate to taste. Now do this to numbers one and three; number 5 is optional in Diagram 2. Area #1 is meant to be lighter, so go back to Levels after this selection is made and refined, and drag the white slider in Input Levels to the left until satisfied.

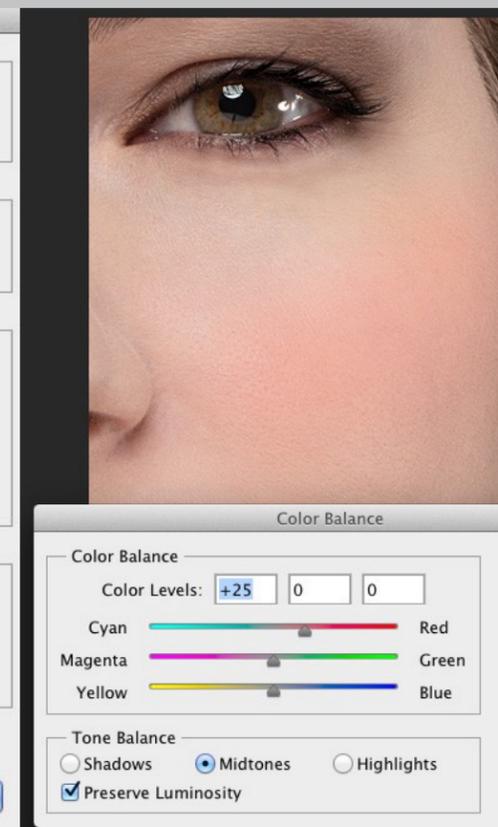
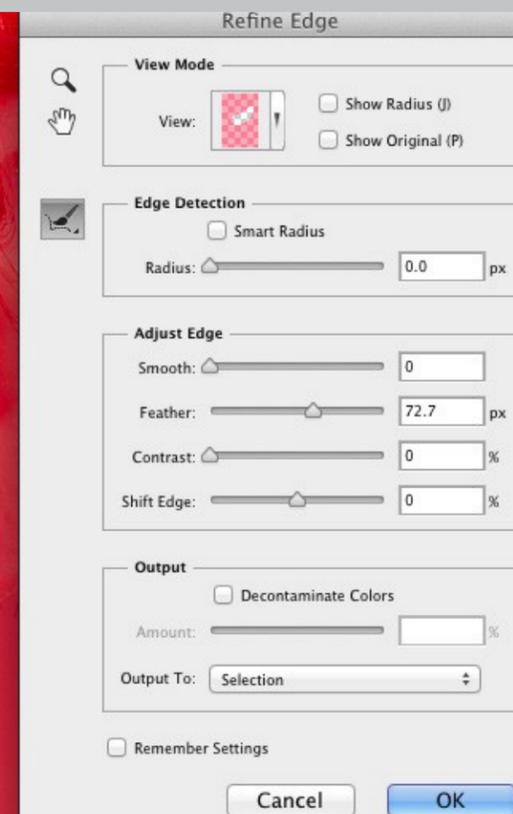
To add eyeliner, add a new blank layer and use the Brush tool with black. Set the Brush opacity to 50% and brush a thin line along the upper and lower lash line, staying away from the waterline (#4 in Diagram 2). To make the eyeliner seem more realistic, change your Blending Mode, located in the Layers Panel, to Soft Light. You can also play around with the opacity of this layer for your desired look.

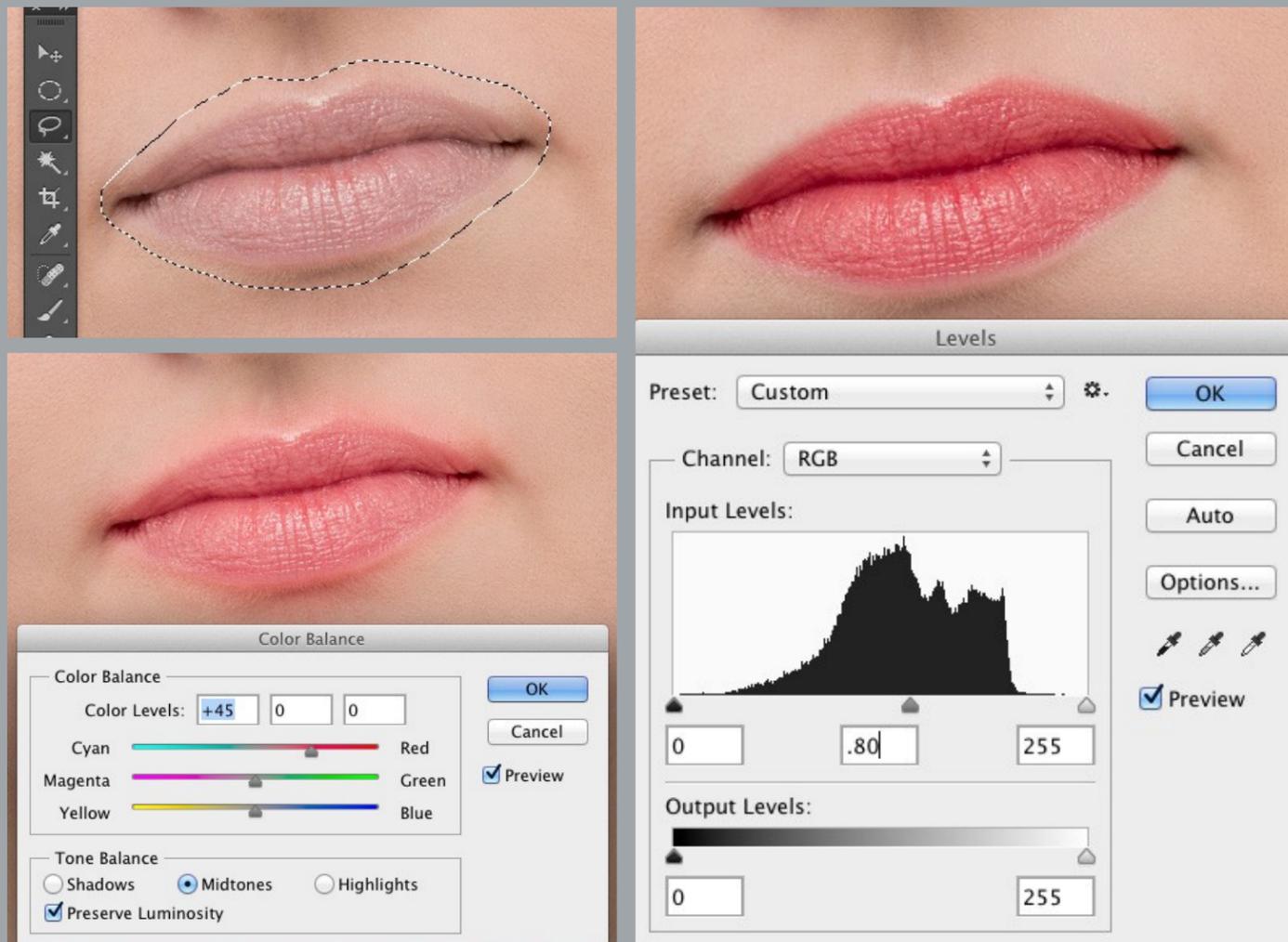


CHEEKS

This technique is similar to shadowing the eyes when making your selection. First you'll need to find the cheekbone. Understanding the human skull is helpful. Look at diagrams of skulls to get an idea of the structure. Blush is applied from the "ball" of the cheek, commonly referred to as the apple, to just in front of the ear. Using the Lasso tool, select around the apple and up toward the ear. This selection will look similar to a teardrop. Again, don't worry about selecting too much. Select an area that, when feathered, will look natural. Using the Refine Edge option like we did earlier, create a nice feathered edge to replicate being brushed on. Change your view mode to Overlay so you can watch where the effect will happen. Drag the Feather slider to the right, staying within the area described above. Click OK.

Now it's time to add color. I used a rosy color. Educate yourself about colors that work with different ethnicities. With your selection made, create a new layer with that selection by pressing Alt/Option J. Select your new layer and go to Menu > Image > Adjustments > Color Balance. Make sure the Preview box is checked. Choose the Cyan/Red slider, and drag it toward red. Don't be too worried about getting the shade correct, because you can always play with the opacity of your layer in your Layers Panel. You can also play around with the darkness by adjusting the Levels, similar to creating the eye shadow and/or saturation. Go to Menu > Image > Adjustments > Hue/Saturation, and give it a different hue by playing with the Hue slider.





LIPS

Adding color to the lips isn't much different. Like the eye shadow and cheeks, you're going to make a selection with the Lasso tool. Draw around the mouth with plenty of space to mask out the excess. You won't have to refine this selection. Press Alt/Option J to create a new layer with your selection. Go to Menu > Image > Adjustments > Color Balance. This is where you can create a color to match your subject. I went for a red lipstick look to complement the tone of my subject's skin and blush. Slide the Cyan/Red slider to the right toward Red until you're happy. Press OK. You'll be able to make adjustments afterward, so don't sweat it.

Now that you have your color, add a Mask and brush out the excess. Change your brush to black, and paint out the excess around the lips to simulate lipstick. If you want, go to Menu > Image > Adjustments > Levels and play around with darkness and lightness. You can also change the Saturation/Hue by going to Menu > Image > Adjustments > Hue/Saturation and playing around with the sliders. Having fun? Of course you are!



PHOTOSHOP

You can start with these basics and let your creativity guide you. Learn makeup application with simple Internet searches, and study diagrams. Never stop educating yourself, and, most importantly, have fun. ■



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BE A DON'T
SQUARE

WITH MICHAEL CORSENTINO



DON'T BE A SQUARE

HOW TO LIGHT GROUP PORTRAITS BY UNDERSTANDING THE INVERSE SQUARE LAW



Many considerations come into play with group portraits: posing, wardrobe and the right camera angle among them. But lighting adds an additional layer of complexity and potential confusion. This is because lighting group portraits is technically counterintuitive, or at least it was for me. In this month's column, I'll demystify one of the governing principles of lighting, known as the "inverse square law."

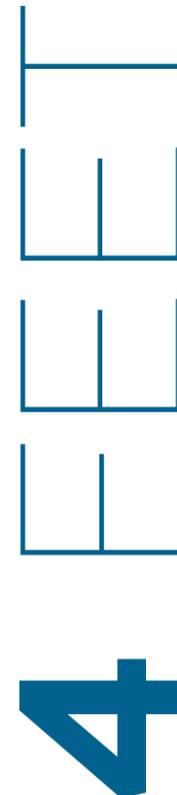
THE BIG TAKEAWAY

A quick Google search brings up this definition of the inverse square law: "any physical law stating that some physical quantity or strength is inversely proportional to the square of the distance from the source of that physical quantity."

You can skip the following paragraph if math scares you. But if you want to understand the basics of this law, read on.

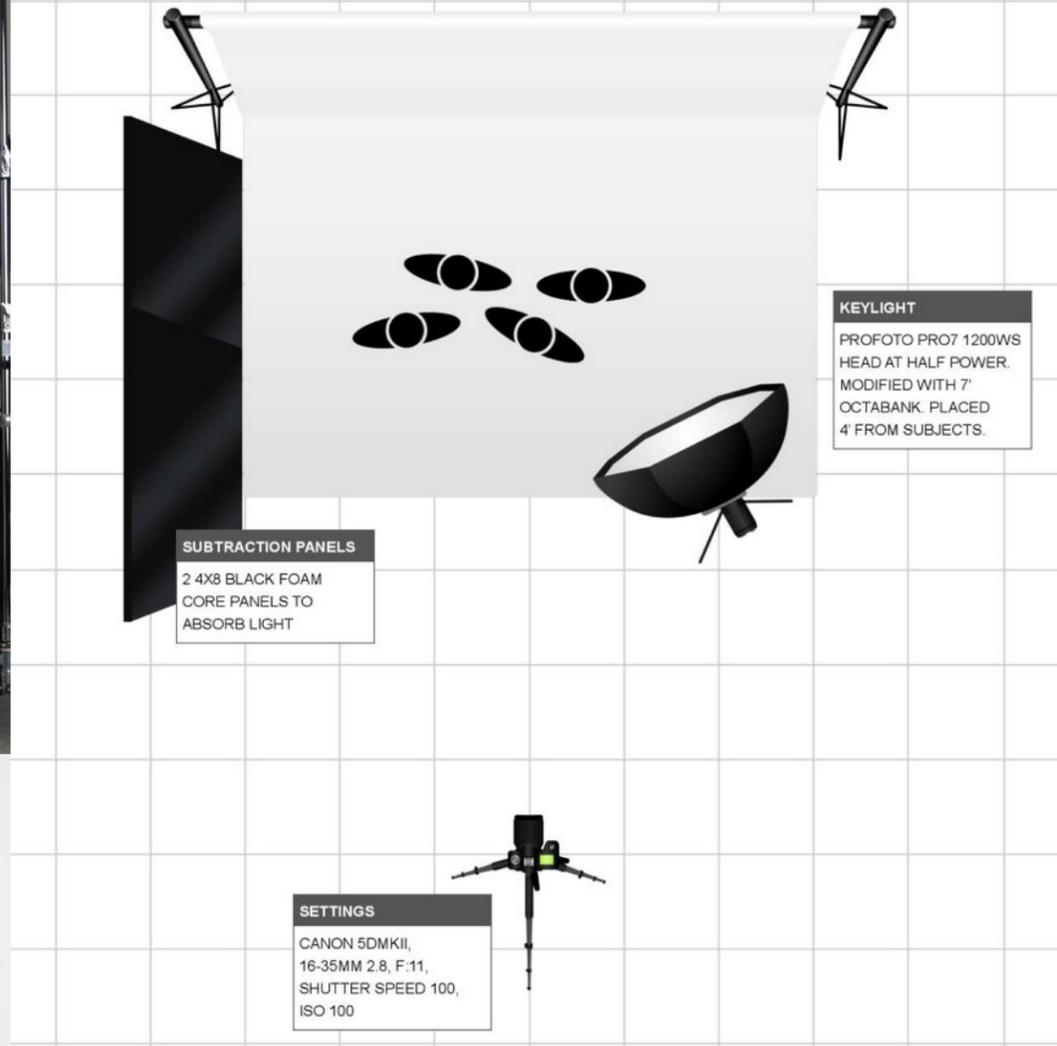
At its most basic, the inverse square law explains how light behaves as it travels over a physical distance. It might be easy to assume—incorrectly—that a subject 2 feet from a full-power light source would receive half as much illumination than a subject 1 foot from the same light source. It seems to make sense that double the distance should mean half as much light reaching the subject. But light doesn't work that way. According to the inverse square law, light is inversely proportional to the square of the distance. Which means that to figure out the illumination falling on the subject twice the distance from the light source, you'd need to determine the square of 2, which is 4, and then determine the inverse of 4, which is 1/4, to come up with the result of 1/4, or 25 percent of illumination over that distance. If this kind of makes your head spin, don't worry—let's zero in on the big picture.

Understanding the law is important when lighting group portraits because light behaves very differently when it's placed close to a subject or group of subjects than it does when placed far from them. As light travels over a physical distance, the rate at which its power (light reaching the subject) falls off (aka "falloff") drops significantly at distances closer to the source, and then levels off and becomes much slower and evenly distributed over longer distances.



Placing the light 4' from the band produces uneven and poorly distributed light. Only the subject at the front of the group is properly exposed while those behind her are underexposed due to the rapid falloff of light occurring close to the source.

© Michael Corsentino



F22 F18 F11 F8 F5.6 F4



Notice how rapidly light falls off close to the source. Reference the f-stop and distance scales above and below.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

DON'T BE A SQUARE

In practical terms, this means that staggered groupings close to a light source will be illuminated unevenly. Properly metered, those subjects closest to the light source will be exposed correctly, while those just behind them will be considerably underexposed. This is because the rate of falloff is most extreme closest to the source.

This can be kind of counterintuitive. It's easy to think that the closer you put a light to a group of subjects, the more illuminated they'll all be. But, as we've seen in the example images, this is dead wrong. As you can plainly see, the farther away the light source is placed from the subjects, the less dramatic the falloff is; and the illumination is more even throughout all the positions the group occupies.

So for relatively even lighting in group portraits, push the light back, Jack!

THE SETUP

For this portrait of Orlando rock band Blaine the Mono, with which I wanted to illustrate the inverse square law, I knew I'd need a large light source to illuminate all four members. Additionally, my meter readings told me that, since I'd ultimately be placing my light 15 feet away from the band for my final exposure, I was going to need a lot of light (power) to get to my desired f-stop reading of f:14. Especially since I was using a 7-foot Octabank to modify and spread the light. These are awesome broad-source modifiers that provide a relatively soft and even light, even at 15 feet. But they do eat up a considerable amount of light.

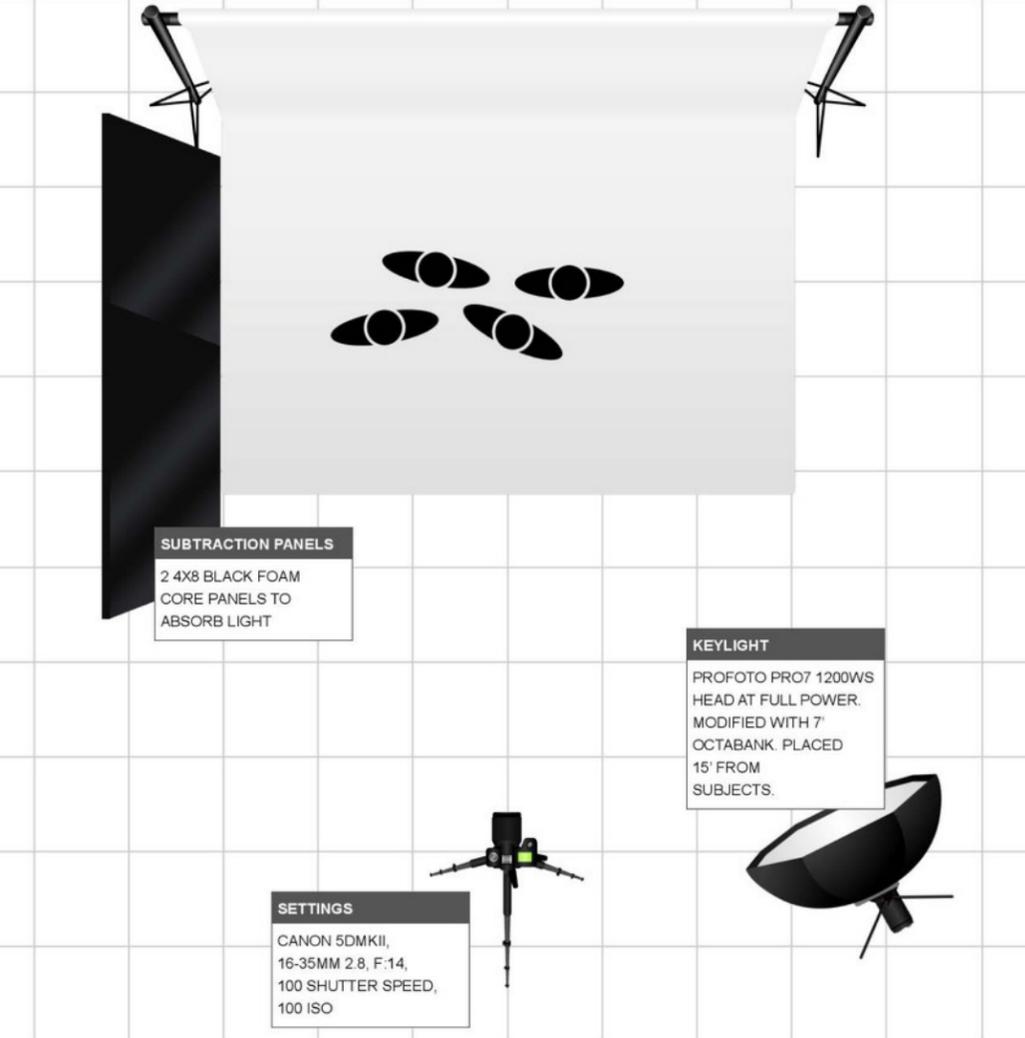
I quickly realized I'd need to abandon any notions of using one of my Profoto 500W D1 Air digital heads, and went old school, pumping the entire 1200W from a Profoto 7B power pack into one Profoto Pro7 Head. In other words: full throttle! This setup qualifies for my One Light Wonder category. It took just one light and two black panels to create the portrait you see here.

My studio has white walls, so in order to suck up light, create a more modeled lighting on the band, and kill any bounce or stray light, I created an 8x8 black wall using two 4x8 black foam core panels placed camera left, opposite my key light camera right. This is known as subtractive lighting (so if anyone ever asks you for a subtraction panel, now you know what they mean). The choice of f:14 was simply a depth-of-field consideration based on needing enough latitude to keep each band member in focus in a staggered front-to-back formation. A case could easily be made for f:22, but I wanted to keep my ISO at 100. If you don't have 1200W of power to work with, don't worry—just use a higher ISO or shoot bare bulb. Your light won't be as soft, but you'll have a lot more of it. In a pinch, a large diffusion panel could be substituted for the Octabank I used.



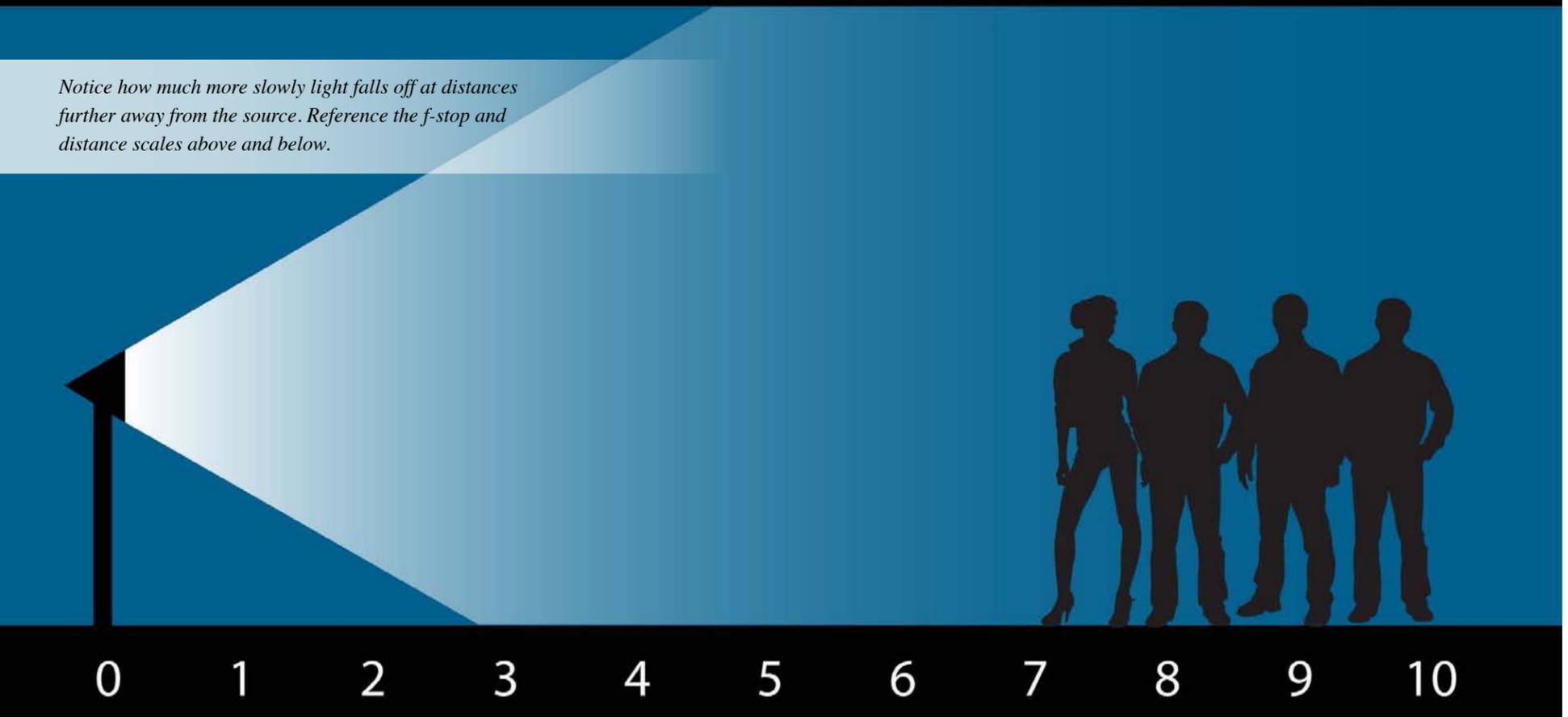
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On the other hand, placing the light 15' from the band produces a relatively even distribution of light on all members of the band. This is due to the much slower falloff occurring at distances far. There really is no right or wrong, just different techniques and



F22 F18 F11 F8 F5.6 F4

Notice how much more slowly light falls off at distances further away from the source. Reference the f-stop and distance scales above and below.



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E
15

DON'T BE A SQUARE

It's worth mentioning that my studio has a gray concrete floor. If the floor in the space you're shooting is black, white or a color other than gray, you need to kill it (cover it) in order to control it. Think about the green color cast you can get when shooting a group standing on green grass. Ideally, you'd use a large piece of black (subtractive), white (reflective), silver (reflective) or gold (reflective) material to remove any color cast and control the light. Subtractive material nullifies any color cast, and absorbs any light hitting it. Reflective materials such as white, silver and gold remove any color cast from the floor, open up shadows and add any color bias they contain to the image.

In the final image, I used subtraction panels. But when the key light was placed 4 feet from the band, I experimented with white reflective panels in order to open up the shadows in camera left.

In this month's video, I show examples of this, as well as the effect your camera angle can have on group portraits. I also discuss my preferred posing style, and how I try to learn something new from each shoot. Check it out.

NO RIGHT OR WRONG

There really is no right or wrong, just different techniques and the effects they produce. You might like the look of the portraits produced with the key light 4 feet from the band, and in some cases, I might like that too. In this case, the point was to illustrate a simple way to produce even lighting for a group portrait.

I hope this inspires you to try your hand at lighting a group portrait of your own. Let me know what you come up with. See you next month! ■



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MINI
SESSIONS
&
THEMED
EVENTS

with Lori Nordstrom



BY Lori Nordstrom



There are two schools of thought regarding mini sessions and events by high-end portrait studios. One is that they devalue the brand we are trying to create. The thinking goes that if we are trying to get our clients to spend thousands of dollars and to really see the value of wall portraits and heirloom albums, we shouldn't be offering mini sessions with "cheap" packages because it gives clients the idea they can just do these less expensive sessions and never invest in a regular portrait session. The second school of thought is that by offering these shoots, we can reach a segment of the market that we normally would not, or may even turn down.

I think mini sessions and themed events can be a powerful profit center. You can plan them monthly, quarterly or seasonally. I've known photographers who only do monthly themed events as their entire business model, but for most, these events are a second or third product line.

Below are a few indispensable tips I've learned through years of trial and error.

1 | PLAN IN ADVANCE

Planning my calendar for the year is important to me because I don't want to get into the middle of a month and realize I'm not going to hit my goals for that month. By planning my event calendar in advance, I can also plan my marketing and put some action steps in place to make sure it will be successful. I want to network with the right people, get the word out in the right circles and in general make sure I am in front of who I need to be in front of.

Do some planning and decide how many special events you want to add to your calendar, how many clients you want to book for each event and what your sales average needs to be for each of those clients. By planning your desired sales average, you'll be able to better plan your pricing. I always have a salesperson helping out with special events, so I need to figure that cost into my profit equation. Locations, set building and materials all go into your planning as well. You'll also want to add post production to your schedule. (I normally figure one day of production—retouching and placing orders—per day of shooting.)



2 | MAKE YOUR EVENTS DIFFERENT

One of the things that is important in creating a second product like special events is that you don't want them to cannibalize your regular sessions. Make sure this doesn't happen by making everything about them different from what you do in your day-to-day operations. The obvious thing to do differently would be to make the session time shorter. My events are 15 to 30 minutes, depending on the theme and location.

Other things you can do differently would be offering discounted pricing and a condensed product menu. You can also offer a specialty product or limited-edition piece for your event that you don't normally offer. Show your clients their images and sell to them immediately following their session. Offer themes or a "look" that is not normally offered. This could be as simple as doing a "classic kids" event in all black and white if you usually photograph with vibrant colors. Themes don't have to be difficult to pull together, and can be as simple or as detailed as you like.

3 | SHOOT ON PURPOSE & EDIT IN CAMERA

During our mini sessions, I want to be aware of the time I have to shoot, how many images I want to show and what I want to sell. For example, if my top package includes a purse-size album of nine square images, I want to have a dozen great "faces" or detail shots, or whatever look I'm going for, to fill that book. If my top package offers a certain number of poses, I make sure I have that number of great images to choose from. The trick is not to overwhelm your client. I want to shoot specifically and "on purpose," while deleting images in-camera that I know I don't want. If my top package is nine poses (to fill the purse album), I want to show a dozen images that the client does not want to get rid of so that they are moved up into that higher package.



4 | SHOW & SELL IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE SESSION

One of the keys to profitability for me when doing mini sessions and special events is showing clients their images and selling right after their session. This one step slashes my work time. When images are shown immediately, our clients know that nothing has been done to them, and expectations are very different. They also know what we can do, and we reassure them that everything ordered will be professionally retouched and presented beautifully. I can then plan a workflow day for retouching and placing the ordered images.

5 | OFFER PACKAGES FOR QUICK BUYING DECISIONS

I've mentioned offering packages for something "different," but one of the main reasons I offer packages is because it moves the client into the quick buying decisions that need to happen for immediate sales. I structure my packages so that each one builds on the last, offering more as clients spend more instead of changing sizes or options. Have a "no-brainer" middle package that is an easy buying decision because of the products, value and incentives included.

6 | OFFER INCENTIVES FOR TOP PACKAGES

Your top package or packages should include something that is very desirable to your clients—high perceived value that doesn't cut into your profits. This could include a proof set, digital files, sticky album or anything else that doesn't cost you a lot out of pocket, but that your client really wants. These added incentives help your clients make decisions on moving up to the next package. Anytime someone is willing to purchase a package, it is very likely she can be moved into the next spending category.

7 | PACKAGE SIMPLY & INCLUDE A SURPRISE

Your packaging for your special events should be a simpler version of your regular session packaging. Keep costs down by cutting out the bells and whistles. You still want your packaging to be pretty and distinctive, but you can easily brand bags and boxes with labels to keep things simple. Always include something unexpected in your delivery. This can be as small as a thank-you treat for the child you photographed, or a bonus item that they didn't know they were getting. Small gifts go a long way in keeping buyer's remorse at bay.

8 | RECOMMEND A REGULAR SESSION

After a mini session, offer a discount on a future regular session. Be able to explain the differences to your client. Talk about benefits, not just features. Let them know "what's in it for them." Remember that not everyone will be the right fit for your regular sessions, and that's OK. Special events and mini sessions are a great way to reach people who might not be the right fit for your daily business.

9 | FOLLOW UP

Keep in touch with your special-event clients. Build your mailing list and let them know about future events. Ask if they are enjoying their portraits and what they loved about working with you. Use these answers for testimonials on your website and blog.



THEMED EVENTS & MINI SESSIONS

10 | CONSIDER AN EVENT HOST

Whether you are new to special events or just need some “new blood” coming through, asking a current client to be a “host” for you can lead to new clients you never would have reached before. I often ask someone to host a special event and turn it into a portrait party. During these events, I have one mom do the inviting and scheduling. She reaches out to her friends and gets portrait credit for each mom who schedules with me, and she gets a complimentary session for her child just for hosting the event. If you do this, give your host mom specific goals and incentives. If you want 10 sessions, tell her that your goal for her is to book 10 to 12 sessions. She will get \$50 in portrait credit for each mom who books, and if she books 10, she will get an additional \$100 in credit (or a piece of photo jewelry or other item she loves).

Mini sessions and themed events can offer great additional revenue for your business, especially in your slower months. They can also put you in front of clients you normally wouldn't get to work with. ■

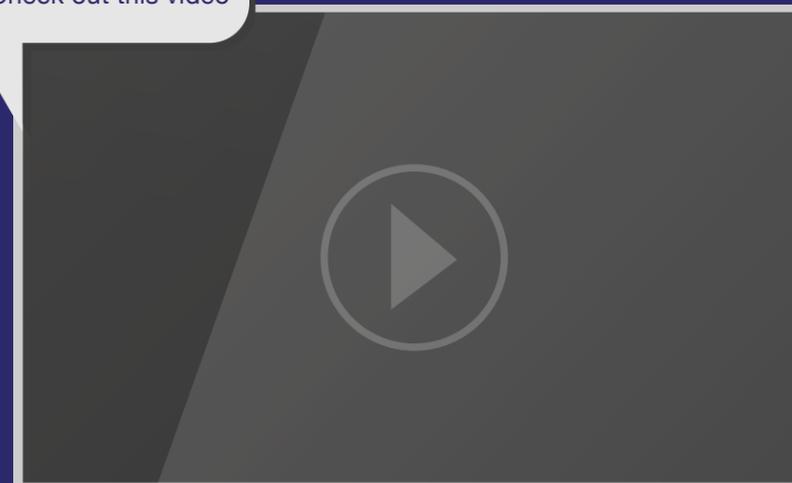


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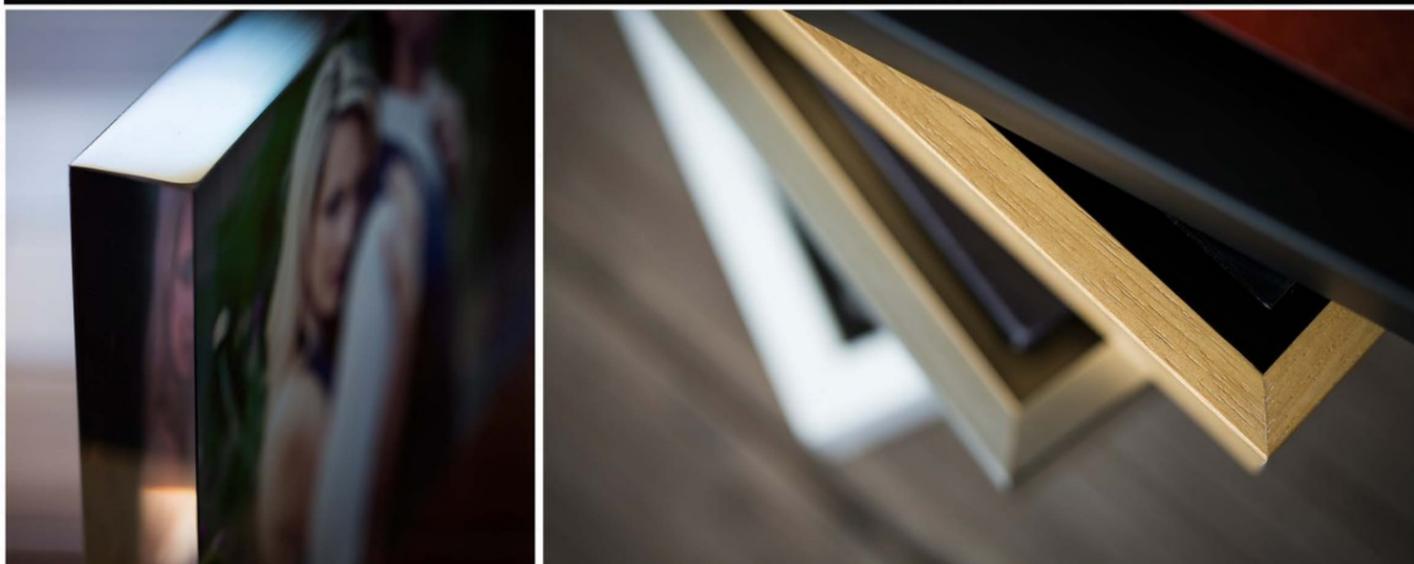
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WHO ARE THE
TOP10
MOST INFLUENTIAL
IN THE INDUSTRY ²⁰¹⁴ ?

WITH SAL CINCOTTA

MOST
INFLUENTIAL
2014

ΣΑΟΑΝ-ΖΩ

SHUTTER

SHUTTER

SHUTTER

BY SAL CINCOTTA



The results are in! You, the reader, voted. What a year it has been. The changes in who holds the most influence over our hard-working readers was a surprise to the staff here at *Shutter*.

I want to thank all of you for voting for me as being the most influential. I appreciate all your love and support. That being said, I felt it made sense to remove my name from the list and focus on others in our industry.

What is influence? For me, influence comes in many ways. It can be the motivation I receive from listening to one of my favorite speakers. Or that nudge we all need from time to time to get up off our butts and try something new. People can have an influence on you, your business and your life in sometimes unexpected ways. I am reminded daily through your emails and posts of the influence I have had on you and your business. Knowing that we have impacted and influenced your life in some way is the most powerful reward any of us could ever ask for.

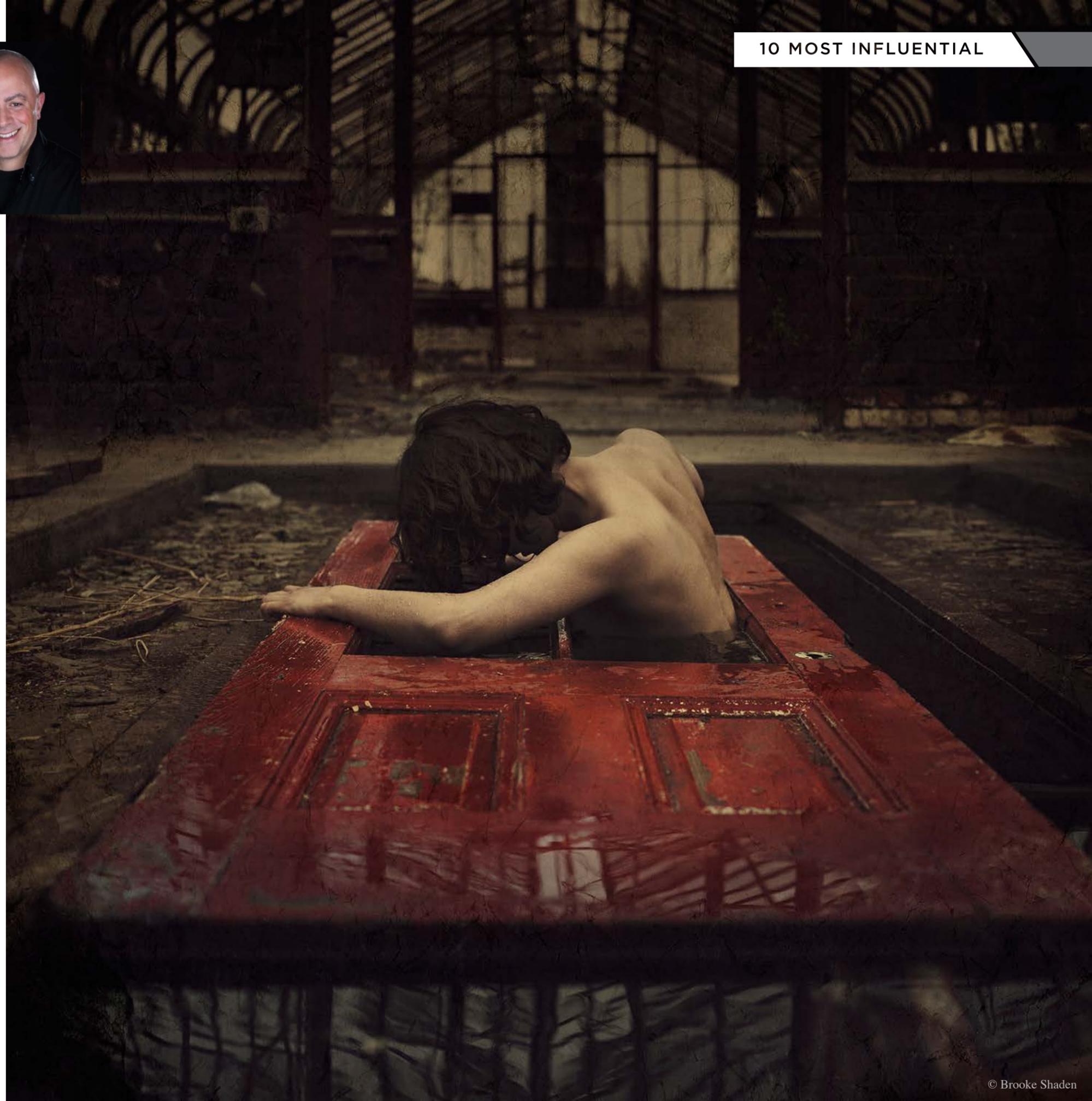
No matter who you are influenced by or how you are influenced, one thing is for sure: This year's list is a mix of talent from all walks of life. All bring their own unique talent, spin and *je ne sais quoi* to our industry, and I love each of them for it.

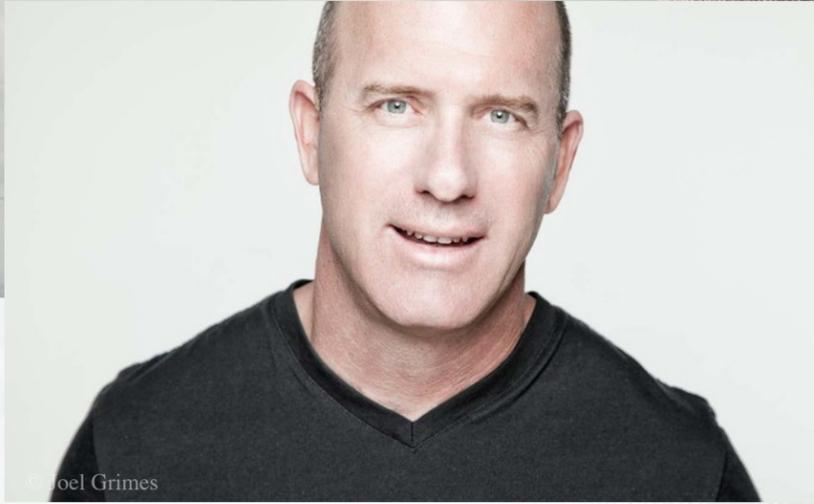
Check out our Top 10, and see what they have to say about their careers, their mistakes and, most importantly, where their inspiration comes from.

Enjoy!



Here are the results of our readers' poll:





Joel Grimes

10

Dude is straight up a magician. I don't know how he does it. I watch his videos, I look at his site, and I am just blown away by the level of creativity and talent this man brings to the table. A true artist, Joel uses all the tools at his disposal to bring his vision to life.

Why do you do what you do?

It all comes down to the fact that I have a passion to create. It is all consuming. Having access to tools like a camera and programs like Photoshop gives me options that, if I lived 10 lifetimes, I would never run out of ideas to create.

How would you describe your style?

I like making people look larger than life. I want to pull something out of my subjects that not only reveals something about themselves, but also something about me, the artist. I also pay a lot of attention to how light strikes a face.

What was the biggest challenge your business faced in 2013? How did you overcome it?

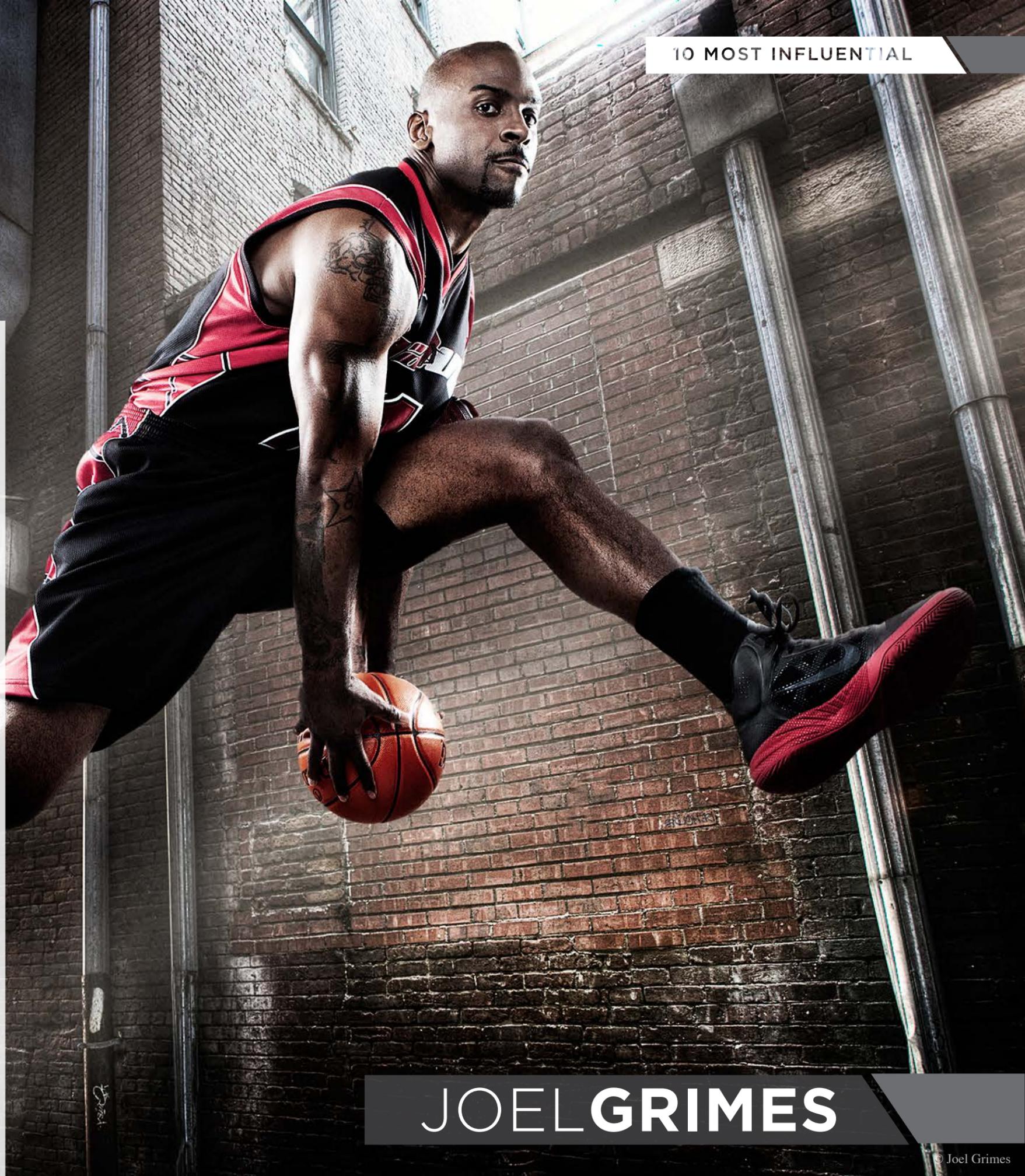
One of the biggest challenges for me is to set aside enough time to do self-assignments. This is how I grow and stay current. I try to do 50 self-assignments a year, which is basically one a week. With the preplanning, the actual shooting and retouching, this is a huge commitment.

Why do you think you or your business stand out from the crowd? What is your x-factor?

I have had the ability to brand myself to the point where my images are identifiable to me, the artist. It takes a lot of time and energy to stick with a look or subject matter that I can repeat over and over to the point of building a body of work. It takes two to three years to build enough images to create a successful brand.

What are you most excited about in 2014?

With each day, I have new opportunities to explore my craft. This summer, I hope to spend around three months on the road shooting background plates for my composites.



What is the biggest mistake you see new photographers making today? How can they improve?

Most people I meet are not willing to put in the time it takes to be successful in this industry. That, coupled with the inability to brand themselves and stick with one look long enough to see that brand weave its way into the marketplace. It takes a lot of nerve to stick with one look. Somehow we feel that if we do everything, or chase after someone else's vision or look, that we are safe. Playing it safe will not get you to the top.

Where do you find inspiration? Who inspires you today?

I get this question a lot. Generally, just being alive is enough inspiration to keep me going. Just take a walk and look around, and you will be inspired. At least I am.

What's on your music playlist right now? What song are you listening to over and over?

I love Coldplay, Ray LaMontagne, John Mayer, James Morrison, to name a few. I can also listen to James Taylor again and again. This is really dating me.

Tell us something about yourself no one really knows.

I used to play the guitar and write a lot of music and lyrics. It is a process of creating, and is no different than what I am doing now, but just uses a different set of tools. When I was around 22 years old, I had to make a choice between music and photography—and as we all know, photography won out.

Where can people learn more?

Website: joelgrimes.com

Blog: joelgrimesworkshops.com



Playing it safe will not get you
to the top.



JOEMCNALLY

9



©Joe McNally

Without a doubt, Joe is a master of light who seems to have seen and done it all in the world of photography. The one thing that comes through every time I see Joe teach is that he loves what he does. I think it's that love and passion that inspires us all to be the best at what we do and to continue to grow as artists.

Why do you do what you do?

Because ever since I first took a camera in hand, it felt like the most natural thing to do, to record the world around me. I still have that feeling, many years later. I always tell young photographers that being a photographer is not something you do, it's something you are. And you can't stop being who you are, so I still have a camera in my hands. It's a way to express my imagination, my sense of curiosity, and to visit worlds and people I would never, ever be involved with if I did not carry a camera.

How would you describe your style?

I'm a generalist, so having a style is something that is tough to nail down for me. I've shot politics, news, sports, conflict, portraits, celebrities, science, medicine, weddings and dogs. (One Life assignment once had me shoot every breed of dog at the Westminster Kennel Club show in Madison Square Garden, believe it or not.) If there are characteristics to my shooting, it is hopefully that I use light well, and I believe I have a strong color palette. I do shoot a lot of horizontal portraiture, which I think stems from shooting lots of environmental portraits for magazines, which tend to run over two pages. I am curious about people, and enjoy telling stories. Perhaps that's a style.

What was the biggest challenge your business faced in 2013? How did you overcome it?

Finding good shooting work always has been a challenge, and it remains so. I'm at a point in my career where many, many editorial types of contracts that govern potentially interesting jobs are too draconian in terms of rights and rates for us to really engage with at the studio. So we ply the waters, send out proposals and work for what might have been considered unlikely candidates as clientele, compared to back in the day when virtually 100 percent of my clients were magazines. For instance, one of our biggest jobs last year was to create a book for a major health system. It was a surprising and wonderful month-long assignment. We're very blessed to continue to find projects to work on.

Why do you think you or your business stand out from the crowd? What is your x-factor?

I can think of only one, potentially. I have a degree of experience and longevity in this industry. That can work for us, and sometimes against us. There are many, many good young photogs out there now, and many talented young art directors who might be looking for new faces and fresh looks. But there are jobs where experience is certainly desirable, and again, thankfully, we find ourselves in the running for those. I just lost an ad campaign (rats!) but there were two other photographers left in the room at the end of the day, and all of us have more than 30 years in, so that was pretty telling, at least for that style of job. One thing that we bring as a strength is production skills. My studio manager, Lynn, has run the studio now for 21 years, and she is an amazing producer. We have done all manner of jobs, from climbing antennas, to 40-ton cranes in the desert, to bringing a 10,000-pound elephant out to a dry lakebed. As a team, in our studio, we can pull this stuff off really well.

What are you most excited about in 2014?

I'm hoping to grow in numerous directions, video being one of them. Hoping to learn some new stuff and create new content, as always. I've had certain proposals out there off and on for years, and I'm very tenacious about them, and I may actually be getting close to obtaining some funding for one of them. Maybe. We'll see. Mostly I'm really humbled, gratified and amazed that I still have assignments to do, and some new adventures to embark on.

What is the biggest mistake you see new photographers making today? How can they improve?

I think there is an awful lot of emphasis on gear and technique in this digital age, which is not deplorable at all—you need to know what you're doing and be conversant with your tools. All good. But not at the sake of emotionally important storytelling. The web offers lots of great visuals, much of it fairly slick and nice looking. But the digital technology we have has also bestowed on us wonderful opportunities to go beyond shooting just one or a couple nice-looking, well-lit, graphically pleasing images. There is opportunity out there to create longer-running, meaningful projects. Those skills need

to be worked on and developed as well, and the ability to be a good storyteller is not a mechanical, technical one. It is about the heart and the mind directing the camera. It is about how you see. That is a component of being a photog that always needs sharpening and work.

Where do you find inspiration? Who inspires you today?

I have lots of photo books. Lots. You have to look at lots of pictures all the time—current stuff, stuff on the web, various websites. But I also find inspiration in those who went before. In fact, I revere them. They were true photographic pioneers and heroes. So my library is like a visit to a spa, visually. I can grab, say, *The Creation*, by Ernst Haas, and feel at peace about the notion of being a photog all over again.

What's on your music playlist right now? What song are you listening to over and over?

A real strange mix, I tell ya. Everything from Lyle Lovett to Tori Amos to Tom Petty to Birdy to the Red Hot Chili Peppers to Jane's Addiction to Bastille to Capercaillie to the Civil Wars. My iTunes tells me my most-played is "Hard Sun" by Eddie Vedder, and "Shake Me Like a Monkey" by the Dave Matthews Band.

Tell us something about yourself no one really knows.

I go by Joe McNally. My confirmation name is Joseph Michael McNally. My birth name is Joseph Thomas McNally, which is something I never knew until I went to apply for a passport. Seems my father really, really wanted me to be named after him, as Joseph Thomas. So he slipped that onto my birth certificate without telling anyone. Then he wanted me to pick Thomas at confirmation. Which would have made me Joseph Thomas Thomas McNally. Thankfully, my mom intervened and told me I could pick a name I liked. I chose Michael, after the archangel, 'cause I thought he was cool. But when I went for a passport, there was such confusion, I dropped everything, and I just go by Joe McNally. Simple is best.

Where can people learn more?

Website: joemcnally.com

Facebook: facebook.com/joemcnallyphoto

Twitter: twitter.com/joemcnallyphoto



It is about the **heart and mind**
directing the camera.

It is about how you see.



©Sandy Puc

Beyond a photographer, Sandy is like a super-educator who's passionate about teaching photographers how to avoid mistakes and make the right business decisions. She has traveled the world educating photographers in the art of posing, lighting and business.

Why do you do what you do?

I started my career in photography at 17. Photography is all I have ever done professionally, and after 28 years, it is a part of who I am. I love working with clients and capturing moments in their personal story. I want to create something they can look back on and enjoy for years to come.

How would you describe your style?

I started out learning from some of the great old masters. With film, you had to be more concerned about each image, and I learned to get it right in camera so my work was more formal and posed. Once I switched to digital, my creative freedom opened up, and I was less concerned with cost control and more excited about the final image.

What was the biggest challenge your business faced in 2013? How did you overcome it?

I went through several personal life changes that forced me to evaluate where I was and what I really wanted to be doing. I have now started working on my business from a more holistic approach, and I am finding that getting back to the foundation and working on the tried-and-true principles of business is what works best. We are avoiding things that take our focus off the target, and we are seeing great results.

Why do you think you or your business stand out from the crowd? What is your x-factor?

I think part of our success is that we are well trained in the art of portraiture. The industry is full of creative new artists, but many lack the education to stand behind the work they promise. We're also now offering video products that separate us from the crowd, allowing us to add more value to the work we do.

8



SANDYPUC

What are you most excited about in 2014?

Currently I am on tour, traveling in 41 cities photographing photographers and their families. My goal is to showcase this beautiful country and give photographers beautiful images to hang on their walls.

I am also teaching a posing and lighting class. This class is special because all proceeds will go back to benefit the nonprofit Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep [nowilaymedowntosleep.org]. This organization provides portraits to families with babies who will not leave the hospital.

I will also be traveling to China in March to produce a film about Chinese adoption. I will be traveling with 18 young ladies who were adopted as babies. I will film their journey as they see China for the first time. They will be able to visit the orphanages they were adopted from, and I'll capture this emotional journey. The most exciting thing for me is that my 16-year-old son, Nikolai, will accompany me as a second shooter.

What is the biggest mistake you see new photographers making today? How can they improve?

Many people complain that the industry has too many

photographers. I don't think this is the real problem. For me, the problem is how they price and deliver their work. Low pricing not only hurts them, but it affects the entire industry. We need to teach new photographers the value of what we do, and help them understand they need to charge a fair price for the images they produce.

Where do you find inspiration? Who inspires you today?

I find the most inspiration from the clients I work with. My specialty is children and babies, and I find them to be so charismatic and full of life. They have such unbridled passion, and they are not jaded by outside influences. If you show them love, they love you right back unconditionally.

What's on your music playlist right now? What song are you listening to over and over?

I have very eclectic music taste. The range is everything from Monsters and Men to Pink Floyd, and even Broadway show tunes. I have mood playlists that I select based on how I'm feeling.

Tell us something about yourself no one really knows.

Most people do not know that I am a total introvert. Although I love people and I love sharing what I do, I tend to get nervous in small groups and one-on-one encounters. Sometimes people perceive me as focused or stuck up, but it is quite the opposite. I am a very emotional person, and I was born with a true love for all people. I cry easily, and it kills me to see people hurting or in pain. On a side note, I have an addiction to Oreo cookies that is supported by my many students around the world. I cannot tell you how many times I walk into a speaking room and someone hands me a pack that I devour in my room later. Someone even sent me an entire case once!

Where can people learn more?

Website: sandypuc.com

Tours: sandypuctours.com

Educational training: sandypucuniversity.com

Templates and art product sales: ukandu.com

Facebook: facebook.com/sandypucfans



©Sandy Puc



© Scott Robert Lim

7

Edgy. Dramatic. Fashion forward. These descriptors come to mind with Scott's imagery. He is a genius at lighting. I have had the opportunity to sit and talk with Scott several times, and he is a madman. Our time is always filled with cracking jokes and just acting, well, silly. It's that lighthearted nature that more than likely makes his clients feel at ease, and helps him get the emotion that makes his imagery so engaging.

Why do you do what you do?

I love the creative process, the challenge to produce excellence and to constantly evolve my work. I also have a sincere passion to help others in this wonderful industry of ours. I feel so blessed to have a great career, and I want to give back—to give those things I never got growing up in the industry.

How would you describe your style?

Hot chicks, exotic places, exquisite lighting! I believe the most beautiful thing in this world is the feminine form, and I try to bring this out in my images, to maximize beauty.

What was the biggest challenge your business faced in 2013? How did you overcome it?

To continue to innovate, to keep pursuing my passions and focus on doing something better than anyone else. Not worrying about my weaknesses, but concentrating on my positives, letting them be featured. People need to take inventory once in a while, and realize what they are great at and not so good at. Then focus energy on their strengths.

Why do you think you or your business stand out from the crowd? What is your x-factor?

To stand out, you need to bring something new and significant to the industry. Combine a few of your passions to create something uniquely excellent to your individual makeup. For example, I love travel, beautiful portraiture and lighting. When I combine all three of my strengths, it greatly contributes to my x-factor or signature style. Be excellent at more than one thing, and combine your greatness into a unique skill.



SCOTTROBERTLIM

What are you most excited about in 2014?

Traveling the world and meeting new and old friends. It's so amazing to meet people who appreciate great photography, the pursuit of excellence and tackling new experiences. I love teaching and helping others get to the next level.

What is the biggest mistake you see new photographers making today? How can they improve?

Mastering the basics of posing and lighting. Photographers need to not worry about making mistakes, but just go out and shoot. Sometimes a happy accident turns into a signature style. Once a photographer understands the basics, he can build his signature style on top of those foundations. I see so many photographers try to create a style without a good foundation, which leads to mediocrity.

Where do you find inspiration? Who inspires you today?

I am inspired by the human experience to overcome great obstacles, to somehow find a way to change the world for the better. I love watching good documentaries with this theme. I admire people who take on the status quo and dare to go against the odds and do something different, innovative and inspiring. People like Steve Jobs and Jesus Christ inspire me.

What's on your music playlist right now? What song are you listening to over and over?

I like going into my favorite clothing stores, like Banana Republic, American Eagle, Zara, etc., and Shazam-ing songs. They play songs that are modern and usually fit my style. But I am forever drawn to R&B and other genres that mix in hints of R&B. Earth, Wind & Fire is an all-time favorite, but not necessarily on my current playlist.

Tell us something about yourself no one really knows.

At one time, I considered myself a high-level table tennis player. If they'd had it in the Olympic Games in the eighties, I would have trained to try to get in, but they added it later, when I was out of my prime.

Where can people learn more?

Website: scottrobertphotography.com

To download my free mobile app and contact info,
text "SCOTTROBERT" to 24587.



I am inspired by the human experience to
overcome great obstacles,
to somehow find a way to
change the world for the better.



BROOKESHADEN



©Brooke Shaden

6

Unlike our previous Most Influential winners, Brooke's work might be described as odd, weird, quirky. I think it's nothing short of genius. I have been inspired by her work in recent months not because I see my brides wanting something conceptual, but because of her process. Brooke is a true artist. She understands the process better than I ever could hope to. No matter what your genre is, I highly recommend looking her up.

Why do you do what you do?

I believe that everyone has a story to tell, and each person's story is unique. You never know how that story will begin to change the world, or at the very least, your own little world. I started photography because of the idea that I could build a life for myself where my dreams met reality, even if it was through a photographic frame. I love exploring my dark imagination and turning myself into a character through self-portraiture.

How would you describe your style?

Dark, whimsical, surreal, fairytale-inspired. I want to bring beauty to situations that others might find dark or disturbing. I find inspiration in all things, but especially those things that might be overlooked or forgotten.

What was the biggest challenge your business faced in 2013? How did you overcome it?

I realized something extremely important in 2013, and that was the idea that I could be whoever I wanted to be. No one could trap me in a single box. And the moment I realized that, I realized I was the only one trapping myself. I want to be a photographer now and always, but I want to be more than that. I want to inspire myself and others. I want to be a writer. I want to explore storytelling and the impact that can have through education. I had to rebrand myself, and overcoming any obstacle is often as simple as changing your mind and being confident in that change. Easier said than done, but the moment you free yourself, you allow endless possibilities to open up.

Why do you think you or your business stand out from the crowd? What is your x-factor?

Sincerity. I think that being passionate and sincere is the best thing anyone can do to create an artful business. Treat others the way the best version of you would act.

What are you most excited about in 2014?

This is an impossible question! I am excited about creating. Yes, that's broad, but I have so many projects that I am beaming about! I am creating a couple new photo series that I am excited to challenge myself with. I'm starting work on a documentary about fear, passion and photography. I am starting a photo school in India for survivors of human trafficking. And I'm working on a novel. That might all sound nuts, but those are my passions, and I've resolved that 2014 is the year I make no apologies and pursue what I love.

What is the biggest mistake you see new photographers making today? How can they improve?

Trying to do what they think others want. If you can create the works you love passionately, the rest tends to fall into place.

Where do you find inspiration? Who inspires you today?

I find inspiration in knowing that my imagination can become reality. There is no single thing, be it a place, prop, color, etc., that can inspire me as much as the notion that I can be the creator of my perfect world.

What's on your music playlist right now? What song are you listening to over and over?

The Irrepressibles' "In This Shirt."

Tell us something about yourself no one really knows.

I've never had a drop of alcohol in my life. Nothing against it, I just don't like doing things that will alter my natural state. Something else: I hardly ever brush my hair, at least fully. So even if my hair looks nice on the outside, I usually have a few dreadlocks underneath. And my mom is a hair stylist—I'm bad!

Where can people learn more?

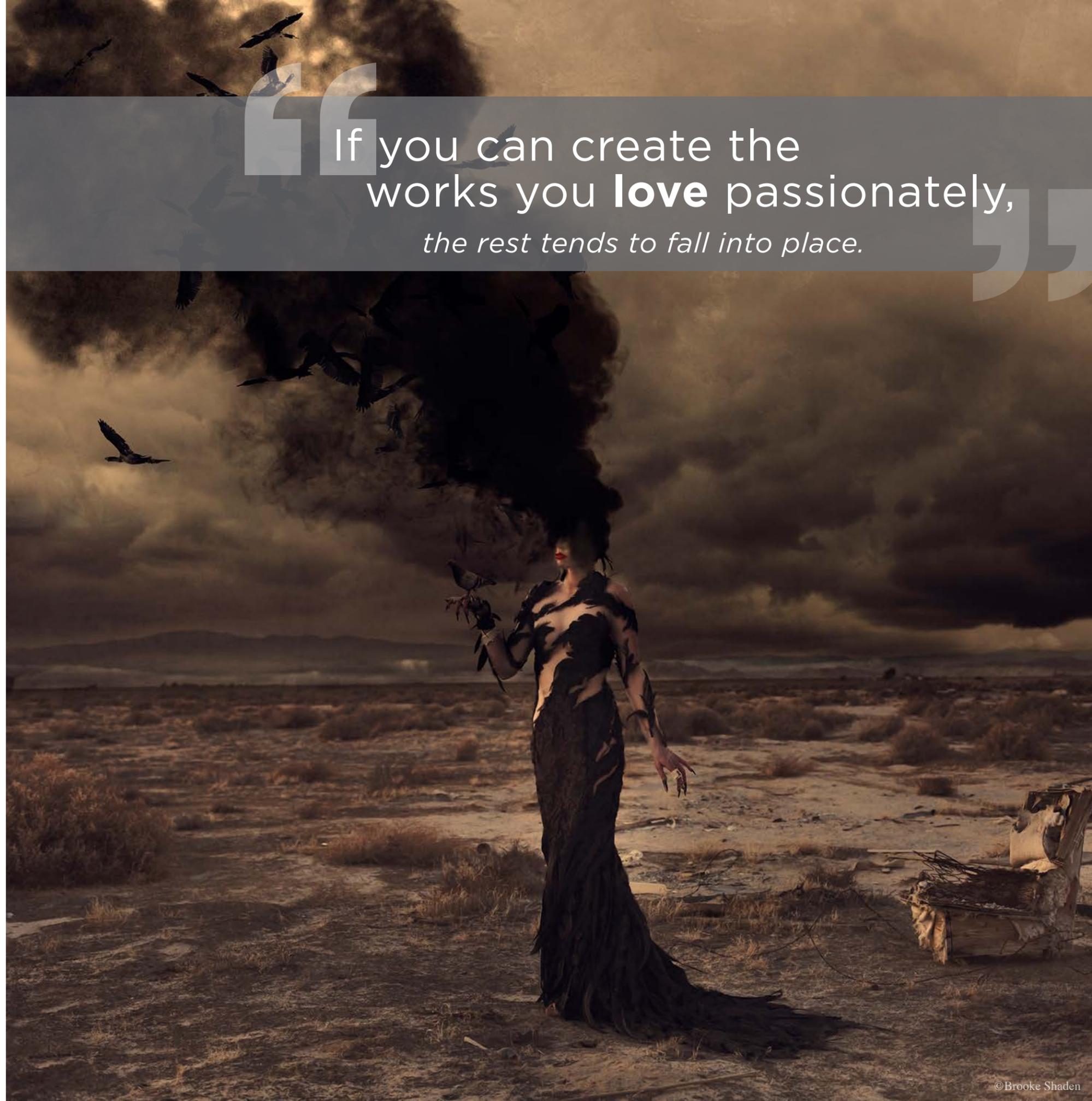
Website: brookeshaden.com

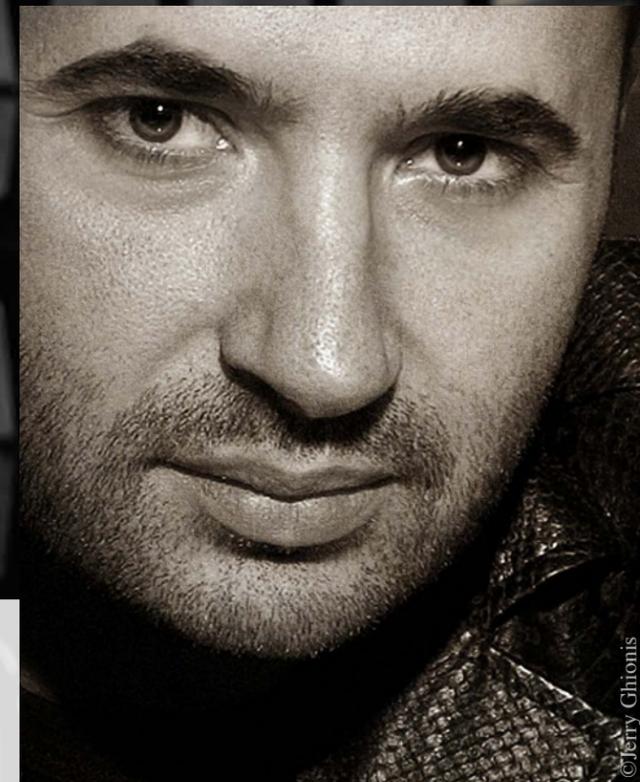
Blog: promotingpassion.com

Facebook: facebook.com/brookeshadenphotography

Twitter: twitter.com/brookeshaden

If you can create the works you **love** passionately, the rest tends to fall into place.





©Jerry Ghionis

5

When I started out, Jerry was one of the first photographers I found whose style I could relate to. It was fun and timeless, yet it was creative and modern at the same time. If you are a wedding photographer and have not heard of or been inspired by Jerry at some point in your career, you have got to get out more often. Jerry is a fun-loving Aussie whose artistic vision is like no one else's I have ever met. Watching Jerry work under adverse conditions will leave you speechless. He can make something out of nothing. And that's a skill we could all use!

Why do you do what you do?

I live and breathe photography, and am literally addicted to it. I love the creative process and the constant challenge of improving my craft and bringing out the best in whomever I'm photographing. Reinvention is the key to my longevity. Teaching fellow photographers is an equal passion of mine that I have indulged in for over 14 years. Making a difference and influencing people in a positive way is my purpose. I use photography as a vehicle to create and protect my happiness.

How would you describe your style?

My style is glamorous yet natural. I'm confident that I can make almost anyone look and feel beautiful in front of my camera. There is always an edge to what I do. I love not only capturing the natural magic on a wedding day, but creating magic of my own. Capturing and evoking emotion is very important to me, as is making my images dramatic and memorable.

JERRY GHIONIS

What was the biggest challenge your business faced in 2013? How did you overcome it?

Like any business owner, there is a constant battle to balance work and life. My business plan is: “How do I make the most amount of money in the least amount of time, with the least amount of investment, with the most amount of fun?” Learning to say no without regret can be a very powerful thing. My wife, Melissa, and I simply maintain that we will stop working by 6 p.m. on weeknights, and we don’t work on weekends unless we’re photographing a wedding. We simply don’t forget to have a life!

Why do you think you or your business stand out from the crowd? What is your x-factor?

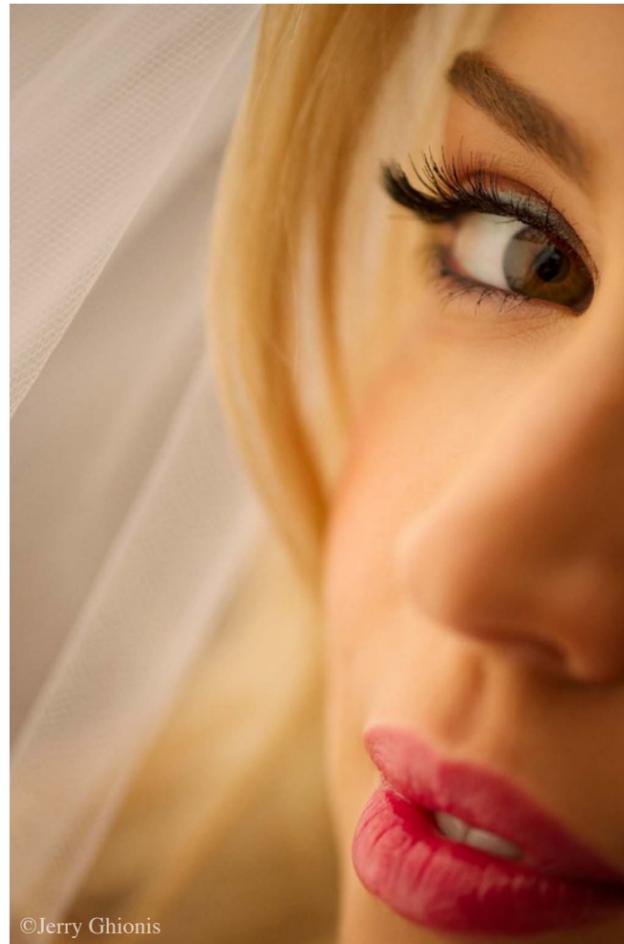
I believe the biggest difference between not-so-successful people and very successful people are that the latter are doers. Nothing will replace hard work, dedication, reinvention and calculated risks. I work on my business and not just in it. I believe that my wife and I have a perfect balance of creativity, business savvy and integrity to maintain our relevance and longevity.

What are you most excited about in 2014?

Melissa and I will be on a 33-city tour in the U.S. this fall called the “How to Wow” tour.

What is the biggest mistake you see new photographers making today? How can they improve?

Being popular seems to be more important to people than improving their craft and focusing on their business. Many aspiring professional photographers shoot their first wedding with little or no experience. I would strongly encourage photographers to assist an established photographer for at least a year before they shoot their first wedding. Think of yourself as a businessperson who happens to be in photography rather than a photographer in business. Don’t set a precedent early in your career that will be a difficult habit to break, such as forgetting to have a life outside photography. I could go on.



©Jerry Ghionis

Where do you find inspiration? Who inspires you today?

My favorite forms of inspiration come from fashion, music and cinema. One of my early inspirations was Herb Ritts, who was a master of beauty and simplicity. Today, I simply focus on being better than last week!

What’s on your music playlist right now? What song are you listening to over and over?

My favorite artists are Maxwell, Robin Thicke, Stevie Wonder and James Brown. Lately I have been playing John Legend’s “All of Me” a lot.

Tell us something about yourself no one really knows.

I’m actually missing a third of my left index finger.

Where can people learn more?

www.icesociety.com to learn more from me.

www.theicelight.com for more info about the Ice Light.

Looking for more inspiration? Download the go-to app for photography inspiration and education, Picpockets (“World’s Best Photographs”): www.picpockets.com

Nothing will replace
hard work, dedication,
reinvention and calculated risks.



©Jerry Ghionis

SUSAN STRIPLING



@Susan Stripling

4

I was first exposed to Susan on creativeLive, and I was immediately drawn into her no-nonsense approach to life. Maybe it's the native New Yorker in me, but I love people who can just call it how it is and not get offended when people are open and honest. And that's how I would describe her work. It's open, honest, real, raw. If you take away anything from Susan, take away her strength and confidence in being true to her vision. It will change everything.

Why do you do what you do?

Money. It sounds a bit harsh—don't we all do it for the art? I'm motivated by the need to take care of my family and myself, and I'm running a business that needs to be profitable year in and year out in order to make that happen.

How would you describe your style?

Timeless.

What was the biggest challenge your business faced in 2013? How did you overcome it?

Continually balancing my business and my life—does anyone ever really overcome that?

Why do you think you or your business stand out from the crowd? What is your x-factor?

I like to think that I have a unique eye and a stellar grasp on my technical ability.

What are you most excited about in 2014?

Continuing to strengthen my marriage and my parenting skills—continuing to try to be the best partner that I can to my husband and the best mother than I can to my children and stepchildren.

What is the biggest mistake you see new photographers making today? How can they improve?

So many photographers today are so concerned about the “rock star” aspect of the industry: How can they be “known”? How can they get thousands of Facebook likes? I wish they knew that none of that was truly important, that the important things are creating a body of solid work, caring for your clients and working on your business. If you concentrate on those things, and building a strong business based on good ethics and excellent customer service, then happy customers will follow.

Where do you find inspiration? Who inspires you today?

My husband, Cliff Mautner. He is the best photographer I know. More importantly than that, he is the best man, best husband, best father I know.

What’s on your music playlist right now? What song are you listening to over and over?

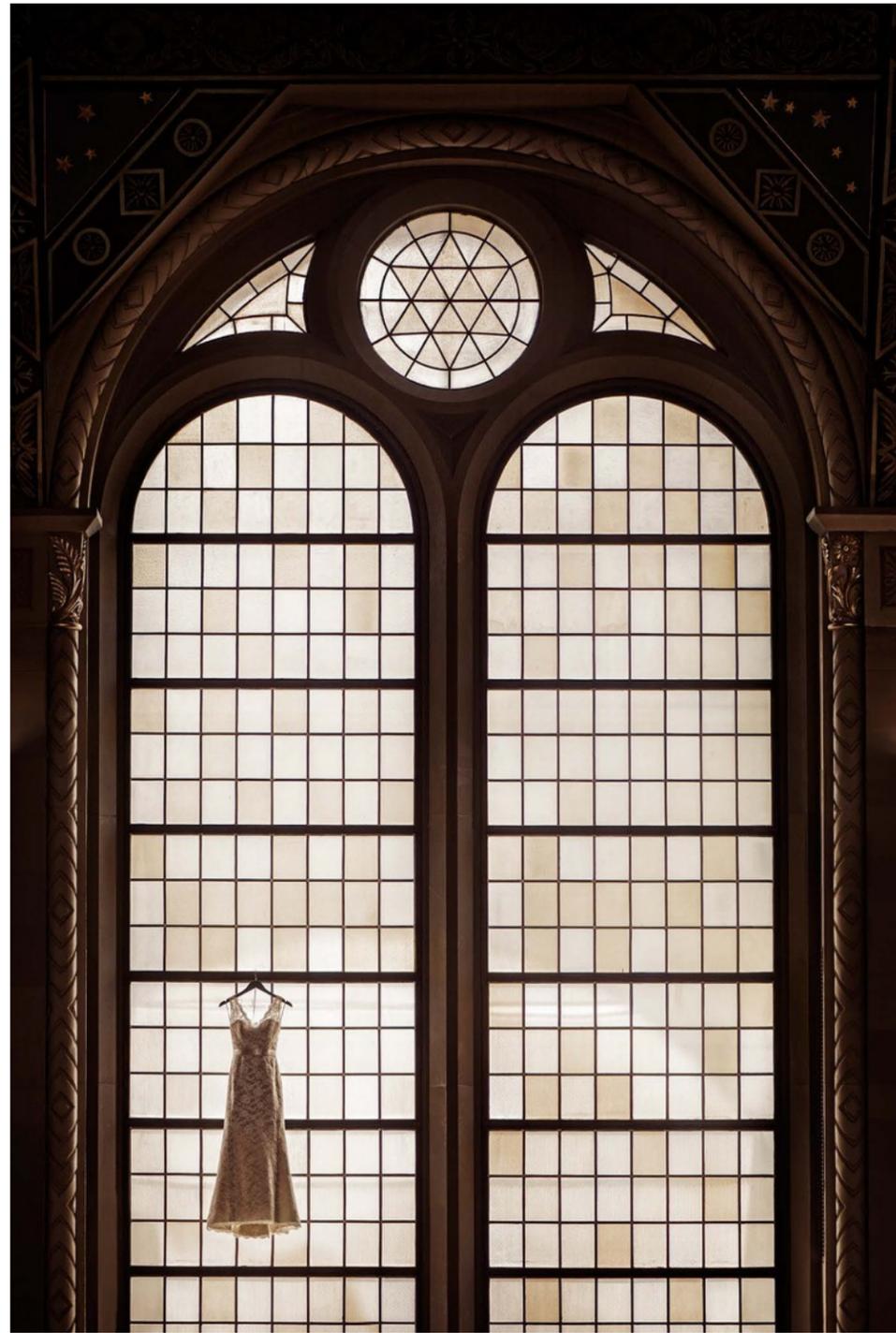
I know it sounds crazy, but I’m not a huge music lover. I do watch a lot of TV, though, and am currently rather enamored with *Sherlock*.

Tell us something about yourself no one really knows.

I love horror movies, but hate to be scared. Does that make sense? No, it does not.

Where can people learn more?

My website: susanstripling.com





3

I've gotten to know Roberto pretty well over the years. He is a personal friend and someone I consider family. My time with Roberto is usually spent laughing and joking nonstop along with his wife, Kim, my wife, Taylor, a bottle of wine and some good food.

Roberto is one of those photographers who just sees things differently. His posing techniques are some of the strongest out there, and his ability to communicate that in a practical way to both seasoned pros and aspiring photographers is second to none. I have often found myself inspired by his work and teaching. It's no surprise to see Roberto move up on the list this year.

Why do you do what you do?

Photography is an artistic outlet like no other. We have the ability to create photos that best represent the most important people and events in our lives. Our photos are deeply treasured, and become family heirlooms. Not to mention, it's fun to play with new gadgets and learn new software. This industry moves so fast that you have to keep on your toes to stay afloat.

How would you describe your style?

Understanding my style was a turning point in my career. I needed to know what I bring to the table and how I differentiate my photography from others. My style can be best described as timeless, romantic, visually intriguing and with a bit of hot sauce.



ROBERTO VALENZUELA

What was the biggest challenge your business faced in 2013? How did you overcome it?

This year, I spend every day working on developing a new way to teach photographers how to learn posing. It's such a difficult subject to master, and also to teach. I had to sacrifice a lot to focus purely on this book. This was for sure the biggest challenge for me this year. But I'm excited to see how this book helps photographers conquer their fears of posing around the world. The book is titled *Picture Perfect Posing*.

Why do you think you or your business stand out from the crowd?**What is your x-factor?**

My business has been successful because I practice my craft consistently and relentlessly. That is my x-factor.

What are you most excited about in 2014?

I'm excited to begin pursuing fashion photography for advertising campaigns. I have dabbled in that here and there, but now I want to pursue it more seriously.

What is the biggest mistake you see new photographers making today? How can they improve?

Honestly, it saddens me that most photographers today try to go cheap with their education. There is no substitute for a really good workshop with a great teacher. No Internet educational alternative will even come close to providing photographers a true educational experience. It's definitely cheaper, but not a substitute for a workshop. I would love to see photographers investing more in true educational opportunities.

Where do you find inspiration? Who inspires you today?

I have been obsessed with Annie Leibovitz for the past year. She inspires me for sure!

What's on your music playlist right now? What song are you listening to over and over?

Mexican mariachi music, of course—just kidding. I like melodic pop music and foreign music.

Tell us something about yourself no one really knows.

I can't believe I'm sharing this, but here we go: I like to knit.

Where can people learn more?

You can find info on learning opportunities with me at my educational page:

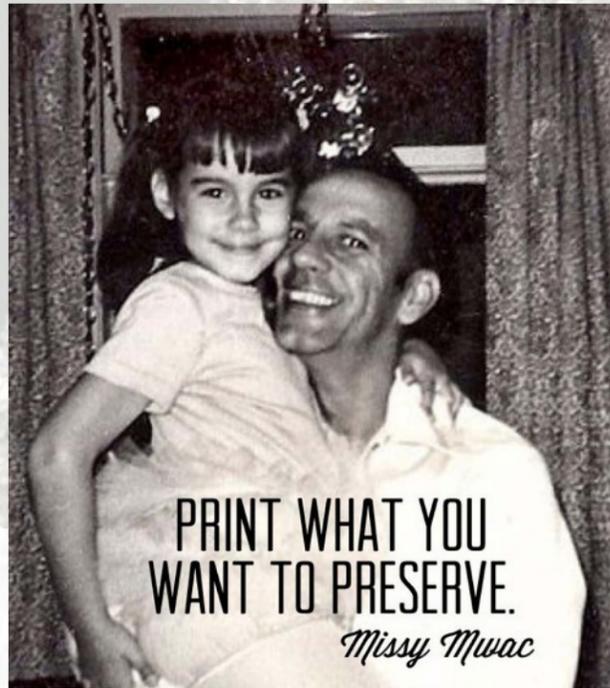
www.pictureperfectpractice.com.

I also post about workshops on my Facebook page, Twitter and Instagram.

Twitter: @robertophoto

Instagram: @roberto_photo





I'm not gonna lie. I was surprised when I saw her pop up on the list, and even more surprised when I saw the votes continue to come in. If you have never heard of Missy MWAC, you are in for a treat. She is a one-woman show who loves to poke fun at our industry, the daily nonsense that goes on in the world of photography, and our "beloved rock stars," as she likes to refer to the big names in the business.

I have been the brunt of many of her jokes, but I have come to accept that if you can't laugh at yourself, you just might be taking yourself too seriously. It turns out, at the end of the day, she loves our industry just as much as we do.

Why do you do what you do?

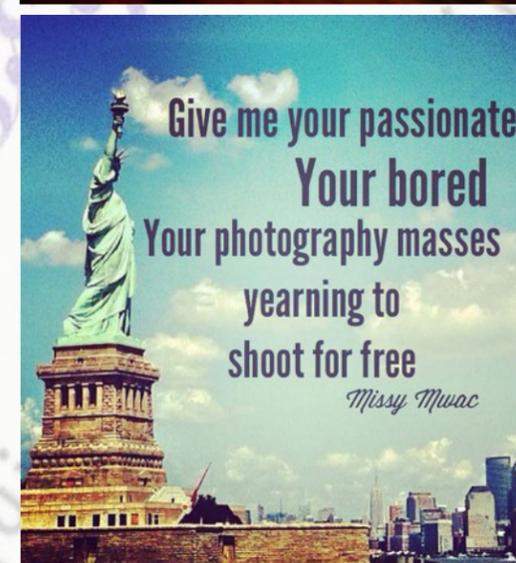
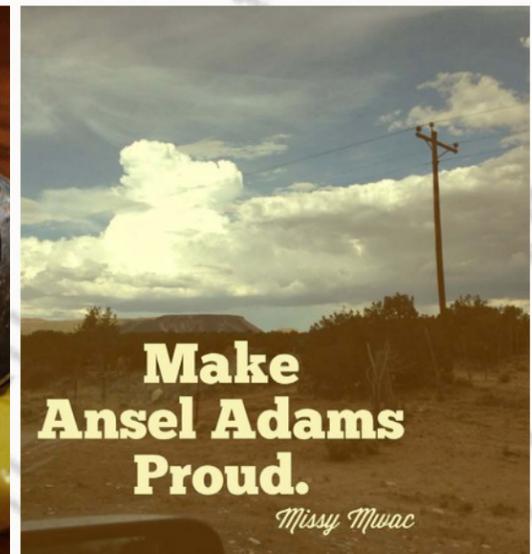
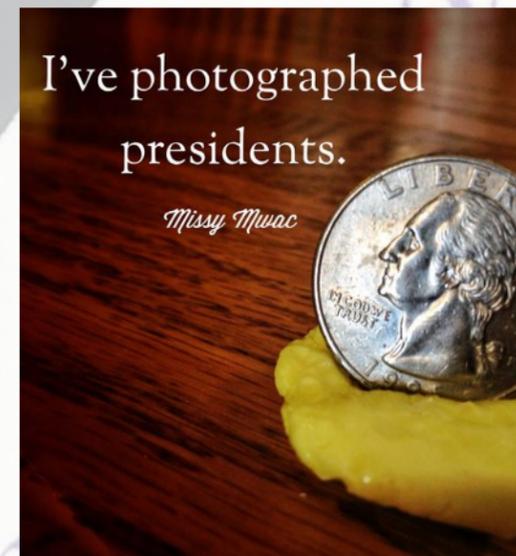
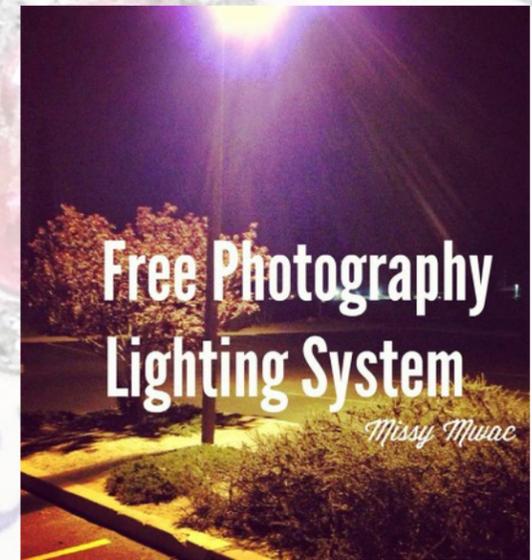
There's a heck of a lot of information floating around the photography industry. How do you know who to listen to and what to follow? That's where I come in. I am your guide through the murky waters of professional photography. I keep up to date on what's happening in the industry, sharing the best bits of advice from all over the Internet. Think of me as your photography sherpa, but without all that stuff on my back, and with sparkly earrings.

How would you describe your style?

As photographers, it's important to constantly change our style. My personal style is pretty laidback: V-neck sweater (preferably pink) and jeans tucked into some knee-high boots. Some days I wear a ponytail. I think it's important to be open and alert to what's trending so you know when to change your style—unless it's spandex tights, and then, well, I have to draw the line. My business is too important to go there.

What was the biggest challenge your business faced in 2013? How did you overcome it?

One of my biggest challenges in 2013 was updating my website. I was nervous about incorporating video—would I be able to do it? Would I be able to get my point across in under 15 minutes? Would I be able to shake up my editing and take it to the next level? These are all questions I had to ask myself when Instagram updated its app. Thankfully, I was able to adapt the new filters to my work beautifully, and the video has been a great addition [instagram.com/missymwac].



MISSYMWAC



Why do you think you or your business stand out from the crowd? What is your x-factor?

I can sum this up in two words: *glitter wands*. I take them with me everywhere. Now, I know what you're thinking: "Missy, what is the story with the wands?" I'm so glad you asked. One of my favorite tools in Photoshop is the Fairy Wand. I'm not really sure what it does, but I do know that if you use it, it makes part of your picture kind of sparkle. What's not to love about that? The closest you can get to sparkle is glitter, and so the wands were born. You can normally tell who I've hugged at conventions, 'cause they are covered in glitter. Unless it's George Varanakis from creativeLIVE, who refused a wand and received instead a Missy Disapproving Look. I've not forgotten this.

As for the x-factor, I don't have that. I prefer instead the "xoxo" factor.

What are you most excited about in 2014?

The new *Muppets Most Wanted* movie. And possibly a new camera bag.

What is the biggest mistake you see new photographers making today? How can they improve?

One of the biggest mistakes I see new photographers making is handing over digital files to clients without a notecard. This is very, very important. If you are a new photographer who sells digital images instead of prints, I recommend creating a beautiful notecard and attaching it to each CD, DVD or USB drive you hand over to your clients. The wording would change according to the storage device, of course. For example, the CD notecard would read:

My dear grandchildren,

This bright, shiny disc is not a mini-pizza plate, nor a light catcher for the window, nor a Frisbee. It is a compact disc, and it holds digital images of our precious family. I realize you probably don't have anything to play this on, and even if you find a CD drive in an antiques store, the disc probably won't open at this point, but we wanted you to know what was on here so you wouldn't wonder. Trust us, the images were beautiful.

This way, future generations won't wonder when they find the weird-looking storage device in the attic; they'll know.

Where do you find inspiration? Who inspires you today?

Pinterest used to be my favorite inspirational site, but after looking at hundreds of perfectly organized closets, homemade craft projects and mason jars filled with fruit-infused water, my self-esteem started taking a hit and I had to stop. I will say, though, that the more editing juice I consume, the more inspired I get. And by editing juice, I mean wine. After half a bottle, my work takes on a lovely fine-art quality.

What's on your music playlist right now? What song are you listening to over and over?

Picking a favorite song is like trying to pick a favorite child or a favorite Photoshop action, but here is a small sampling of some of my favorites.

Tom Jones: his entire music library
(Oh, Tom . . . is it warm in here all of a sudden?)

Serebro: "Mi Mi Mi"
(When I first heard it, I thought with all those "me, me, me's," it was a song for photographers, so I got real excited.)
The Monkees: "Daydream Believer"
.38 Special: "Hold on Loosely"
The Cars: "Shake It Up"
Ella Fitzgerald: "Everything"
(The woman could sing the phone book.)
Europe: "The Final Countdown"
(Bonus points if you thought of Gob Bluth from *Arrested Development* when you read that.)

Tell us something about yourself no one really knows.

I only brush my teeth with hot water. My coffee of choice is an Americano with extra cream and Splenda. I used to live in Turkey. My personal hell would be filled with grasshoppers and fish. My adult beverage of choice is Grey Goose vodka. I have an unhealthy love for my dog. I have had water fights in the house with my children. My mom almost named me Starla.

Where can people learn more?

I don't have any workshops. Or a tour bus. Or an online forum. Or a school or university. I don't have anything at all to sell. I just have a YouTube channel and a little Facebook account. But I'd love if we were friends so that I can guide you, too, through the murky waters of professional photography. You can find me at one of these places:

Website: [instagram.com/missymwac](https://www.instagram.com/missymwac)

Video tutorials: missymwac.com

Facebook: If the photography industry was a school cafeteria, I like to think we'd be the fun table in the corner: [facebook.com/mwacattack](https://www.facebook.com/mwacattack).

Or the official Facebook page, which I never write on.

Please—you can't communicate properly on a page,

although you can buy "likes" for them:

[facebook.com/missymwac](https://www.facebook.com/missymwac).

Twitter: I have an account, but the 140 character limit is painful to me. I use more words than that ordering a Big Mac: twitter.com/missymwac.

Tumblr: missymwac.tumblr.com



©Sue Bryce

1

Who hasn't been influenced by Sue Bryce? She has singlehandedly revived an entire genre. She makes it all look so easy. She's good at what she does, but most of all, she loves to share. She wants success for each and every one of you out there.

No matter your style of photography, there is something to learn from Sue. As a wedding photographer, I have found myself focusing on the beauty of the bride. Sure, sounds simple enough, but trying to see that beauty through the eyes of a female and understanding how your bride wants to see herself is a Vulcan mind meld that Sue Bryce has mastered.

Why do you do what you do?

Because I love doing it. I am in my 25th year, and I don't ever see myself doing something else. I have struggled and suffered, learned and grown. Changed my direction, my beliefs, my goals a million times.

But I still love what I do. I was lucky to find my "thing" so early in life. It hasn't always been easy, but when you are filled with purpose, your path is always laid out before you.

How would you describe your style?

I am a portrait photographer who shoots natural light, contemporary, glamour and beauty portraits with the experience of making women look and feel like they are in a magazine photo shoot.

What was the biggest challenge your business faced in 2013? How did you overcome it?

I love every part of my business, and I have strong bookings and great connection to my next goals and dreams. I feel the biggest challenge this year has been the shift in the industry. We build these profiles on social media, and there is so much negativity, finger pointing and bullying. It's important to not get caught up in it and stay positive about my business and my service and what I offer my clients—they are who is paying me, after all. I have chosen this year not to do workshops and to just shoot and love it.

Why do you think you or your business stand out from the crowd? What is your x-factor?

I feel the authenticity of what I do is the most important part of what I do, and what I teach.



SUEBRYCE

10 MOST INFLUENTIAL

+1 CONTINUED

What are you most excited about in 2014?

Creating beautiful marketing campaigns that all photographs can be part of. I have spent three years educating photographers. Now I want to educate the public on the importance and priceless value of portraits, and the incredible experience of being photographed. My new camera. Moving to Los Angeles. Shooting more video. A fully booked year. And of course working with creativeLIVE.

What is the biggest mistake you see new photographers making today? How can they improve?

Getting too wrapped up in trying to please other photographers and not focusing on what makes your heart sing, the work you do that you get lost in, that gives you joy.

Where do you find inspiration? Who inspires you today?

I am inspired by what message I can create with my photos. What stories I can tell and share. I am excited to be a better photographer every week. I continually strive to be better.

What's on your music playlist right now? What song are you listening to over and over?

I love all music. My office/studio always has music playing. We love Pandora for the variety. My personal iPod has workout music, anything I can run to—hip-hop, Fu Fighters, Beastie Boys.

Where can people learn more?

My next creativeLIVE workshop,
Las Vegas, March 3 & 4:
creativelive.com/courses/modern-womens-portraiture
My favorite portrait workshop of all time,
28 Days With Sue:
creativelive.com/courses/28-days-sue-bryce
Website: suebryce.com
Facebook: facebook.com/SueBrycePhotographer
Twitter: Sue_Bryce
Instagram: suebryce

Shutter Magazine would like to thank all of our Top 10 finalists, as well as their staff, who were instrumental in putting this feature together. We'd also like to thank our readers for casting their ballots—without them, this piece would not have been possible! ■

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» 5 STEPS «

TO GETTING THE MOST FROM

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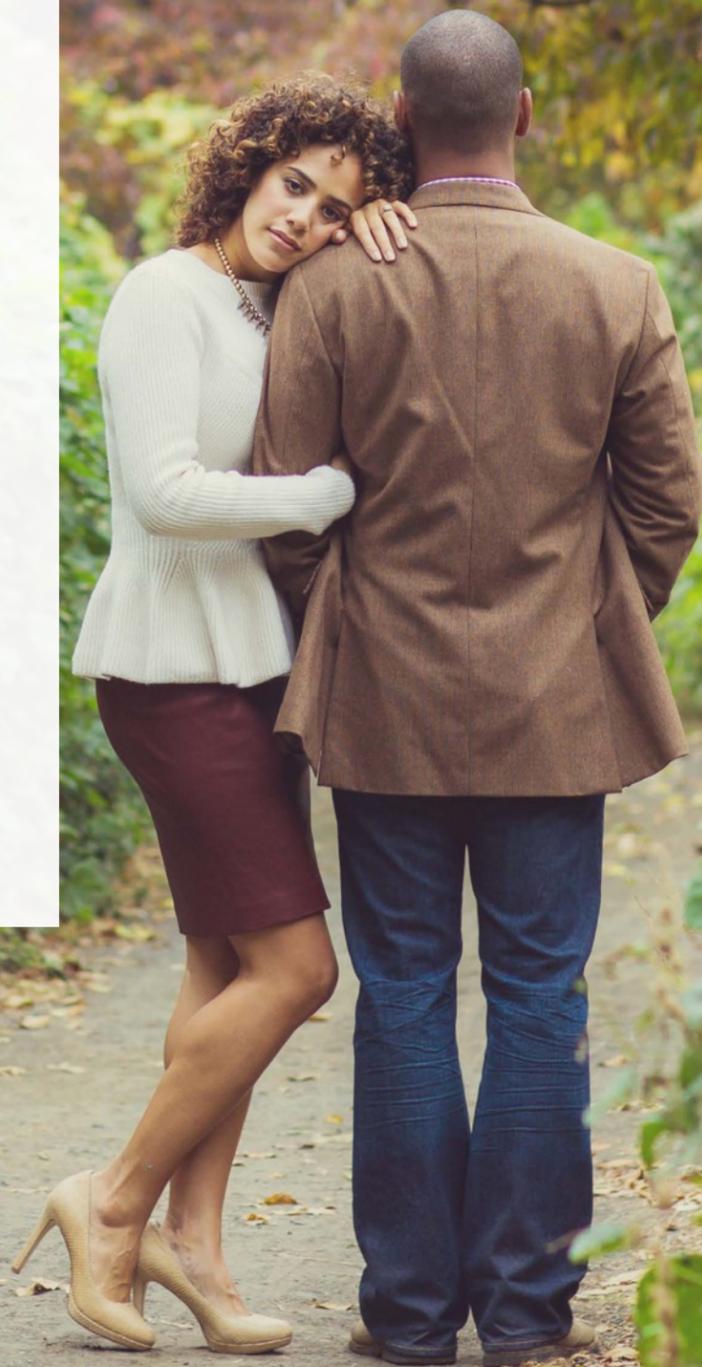
BY VANESSA JOY



I remember listening in to my first client consultation. I was in the backroom of the basement studio of the photographer I was working for at the time. I simply couldn't concentrate on my computer work without eavesdropping on the conversation in the next room. After all, how do you convince a bride to trust you with thousands of dollars, especially when there are thousands of other photographers she can choose from?

Since then, I've made it a practice to let photographer friends and assistants listen in on my client consultations from the next room. Consultations can be nerve-racking, especially if you have no idea what's supposed to happen during one. Here's your chance to eavesdrop on what my consultations are like, and the five things I do when meeting a couple for the first time.

I hold consultations at my home studio, and they usually last 45 to 60 minutes. There are pros and cons to meeting at a home studio, just as there are pros and cons to meeting at a separate studio or at a public place, which I'll discuss in another article.

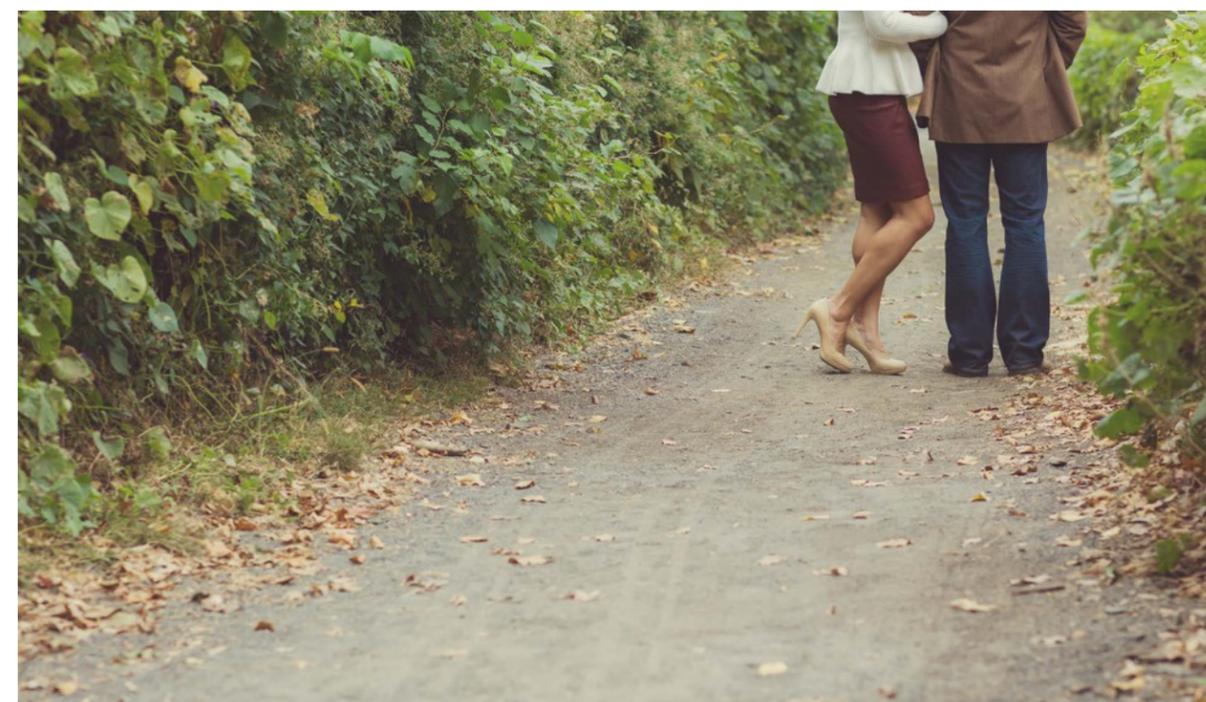


1 KNOW WHAT THE CONSULTATION IS ABOUT

It's not about your work. The clients already like your work; they've seen it on your website, and that's why they contacted you. While I have my work out and we do talk about it, it's not the first thing I throw in their face when they walk through the door. The first thing I want to establish with them is trust, and to do that, I need to build a relationship with them first.

First, I always offer them wine. Whether they accept it or not, I like to throw in the fact that I make my own. It's just a tidbit to talk about while I'm getting them their drink, and tells them a little bit of who I am as a person. As the saying goes, people don't pay you for how good you are at *what* you do, they pay you for how good you are at *who you are*. Recently a new client asked, "Is there anything you *don't* do?" At that point, I knew I had them—they loved me and my lifestyle, and from there it's easy to get them to love what I have to offer.

Just keep in mind that the appointment is not about you—it's about your client. Always turn the focus back on them, what they do, what their relationship is like, what their event is going to be like. Ask questions that get them excited about their big day, about how they found each other. This sets the tone perfectly for the rest of the consultation, and gives you a glimpse into their likes and dislikes so you can tailor your spiel accordingly.



2 MIRRORING

Thanks to AP Psychology 101 during my senior year of high school, I've had this formula in the back of my mind for a while. I would use the mirroring tactic when I was on interviews back when I was a Spanish teacher, but it wasn't until I saw Melissa Ghionis talk about how to transform dissatisfied clients into your best clients—back in Mystic, CT, in 2012—that I realized I could apply this to my consultations as well. After all, *consultation* is really just a fancy word for *interview*, isn't it?

Mirroring is mimicking the body language of the person you're talking with, which often creates a subliminal feeling of connection. If they lean forward in the chair, you should be leaning forward in a similar posture. If they're leaning back in a more relaxed posture, so should you. Now, don't go all Simon Says on them and freak them out. Just the basic imitation of posture should subliminally make them feel connected and comfortable with you.

3 BUILD CREDIBILITY

Photographers are a wealth of information about almost every aspect of the wedding day because we're on scene pretty much the entire day. We see what works and what doesn't, we know what is most likely to send the mother of the bride into a tizzy, and in a time crunch, we're able to magically fit everything together so the bride gets everything she wants. Let them know just what an expert you are in the consultation.

One thing I always ask potential clients is if they know what time the sun sets on their wedding day. Ninety-nine percent of the time they don't, and they're quite impressed when I look into it for them on the spot. Other helpful hints, ideas and day-of suggestions make you look like the credible resource you are, and make them want to have such an asset with them the day of their wedding.



4 SAY "NO" BY SAYING "YES"

The last thing you want to do to a prospective bride is tell her "no" over and over again. "No, you can't have the RAW files [because you don't even know what that means]," and "No, I don't arrive to your house the second your alarm goes off [because who wants to capture your bed-head anyway?]" are not the sentiments you want your bride leaving with that day. That being said, the last thing you want to do is say "yes" when she asks if she can give you their Pinterest board of 340,984 photos as inspiration for you the day of, because that will set you both up for failure and disappointment.

There is an art to saying no, and it's a simple matter of rephrasing your answers to be positive instead of negative. Sure, that sounds like something a politician would do, but don't worry, you'll actually answer the question, not avoid it. All you need to do is figure out a way to phrase it with a "yes" instead of a "no."

"Yes, I give you all the digital files in JPG form so you can easily open them on your computer and save them," or, "Sure, I definitely make sure we capture your day from start to finish, with all the important parts of the day, which is part of my full-day 10-hour coverage package" are much better ways to address those typical bridal concerns.

5 OFFER THEM THE NEXT STEP

If they don't know they can buy it, they definitely won't. At the end of the consultation, make sure they know exactly what they need to do to book you.

There are a few ways to do this. You can use the sales-y (yet effective) phrase "Does this sound like what you're looking for?" You can also take the nonpressure approach of "I'll follow up with you in a few days to see if you'd like to move forward." Whatever your style, make sure you're letting them know where to go from here. Tell them your policy for retainers and payment plans and holding (or not holding) dates in case anyone else wants to swoop in and steal it. It'll help clarify things and set expectations for what's happening next on both sides.



There's so much more I could add to this list: make sure you smile, learn the art of a good handshake, etc. Take a look at this video for top consultation advice from professional photographers around the world. ■



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— WITH A —

BOUDOIR
Spokesmodel

WITH STACIE FRAZIER



BY STACIE FRAZIER

Boudoir photography can be tricky to market. We need content, but we may not always feel comfortable using client images for promotional purposes. Many clients opt out of the sharing option, leaving you with nothing to market. And using professional models goes completely against the concept of boudoir. Boudoir is not about shooting models, it's about making the everyday woman look like one. And when we do get to share client images, quite often our photographs get reported in different media outlets for being too risqué. Or worse: Our images are being stolen at a staggering rate, and we need to be more mindful in protecting them. Oh, the conundrum!

The best solution I have found for many of these issues has been my spokesmodel program. I began my spokesmodel search to not only add excitement to my brand, but also because I needed images I could use for different things without worry of crossing any boundaries with my clients. I often have clients who are comfortable with my sharing their images, but down the road they may get flack from their significant other, and I'll get a request from her to remove images from my website or blog. This can be problematic if I've used her images for marketing pieces.

I also wanted to start planning out specific shoots for special promos, holiday campaigns and more, and knew I couldn't use a professional model for this. It would not only be deceitful in my personal marketing approach, it also wouldn't give my audience something it could relate to, which is incredibly important to me.

Having complete creative control over your campaigns with signed model releases is imperative to successful marketing. Because of my spokesmodel program, I no longer have to search through past shots for the perfect portrait to use for an upcoming promotion. I can plan ahead and shoot specifically for it. I don't have to worry about not being able to use the images—I already have permission. I can also keep different media outlets' rules and regulations more in mind while I prep for my shoots.

But the best part? I add excitement to my brand by giving my audience a face for my business that it can relate to. Following a spokesmodel's journey becomes delightfully addictive as it relates to the story of my brand.



The Search

Spokesmodel programs seemed to be working for photographers of seniors. They were also beginning to get some play in the boudoir world for my friend Danae Burleson of Boudoir Coterie, a trailblazer in this arena. My team and I set out on our search for our own perfect match. We opened it up to anyone who wanted to apply, but we had specific criteria we were looking for in a spokesmodel.

- An everyday woman who is a fantastic representation of our audience base: professional women in their 30s and 40s who run families and/or businesses
- As enthusiastic as we are about our creative endeavors
- Flexible, able to shoot when we wanted to
- Active in the community, with a great social media following
- A blogger who could share even more awesome Haute Shots experiences with her audience
- Someone who understood our mission and how boudoir can benefit women
- Comfortable posing in lingerie, implied nudes or artistic nudes
- A creative inspiration to me

Entries began to pour in. We were surprised to see that we had applications from women in different states. In the end, we decided our spokesmodel needed to be local, which is something we'll add to the rules in the future. After a lot of thought, we narrowed it down to the three most amazing candidates.

Eventually we got our perfect match in Shana Dahan, an insurance broker, who won the public voting contest. Shana has exceeded our wildest dreams as a spokesmodel, and has taken her role very seriously. Not only does she help us market, but she has become an invaluable sister in creativity to me. I have learned that by sharing my ideas with her and the rest of my team, my ideas grow bigger than I could have imagined on my own. When we put our minds together, nothing is impossible.

How To Run Your Contest

- Build excitement by creating a slideshow to announce it. I used anonymous-type images in an Animoto slideshow that got women imagining themselves being my new spokesmodel.
- Explain your needs, rules and regulations, and the benefits of being a spokesmodel up front.
- Applicants must send in an essay explaining why they would be your ideal spokesmodel.
- Get your hair and makeup team in on the action by allowing them to help you narrow down the finalists. Your team should also help to promote your contest with their client base. My team actually told the girl who became our spokesmodel about our contest.
- Your three final candidates should be women who inspire you and who are willing and able to help you market.
- Do a test shoot with the three candidates. This will help market the contest for public voting.
- Set up a dedicated contest page on Facebook for people to vote on the winner. This will get you new likes, since it's a requirement to see the page. We used the ShortStack app for this.
- Post your candidates' test shots with their entry essays, and let the voting begin!
- As soon as your winner is announced, set up your first shoot with her. She will be excited to get started.

Spokesmodel Benefits

- The spokesmodel receives at least three photo shoots during her term (ours is for one year). You can always exceed this amount, as we have done.
- As spokesmodel, she gets recognition as the face of your brand, which means bragging rights for friends and family.
- She gets beautiful portraits to share online. I provide spokesmodels with watermarked web versions from each session.
- I also give spokesmodels an album with their top 20 images. I have far exceeded this amount due to the number of images Shana and I have produced together.
- Spokesmodels have an opportunity to be a part of something amazingly creative, and all the possibilities that come with it!

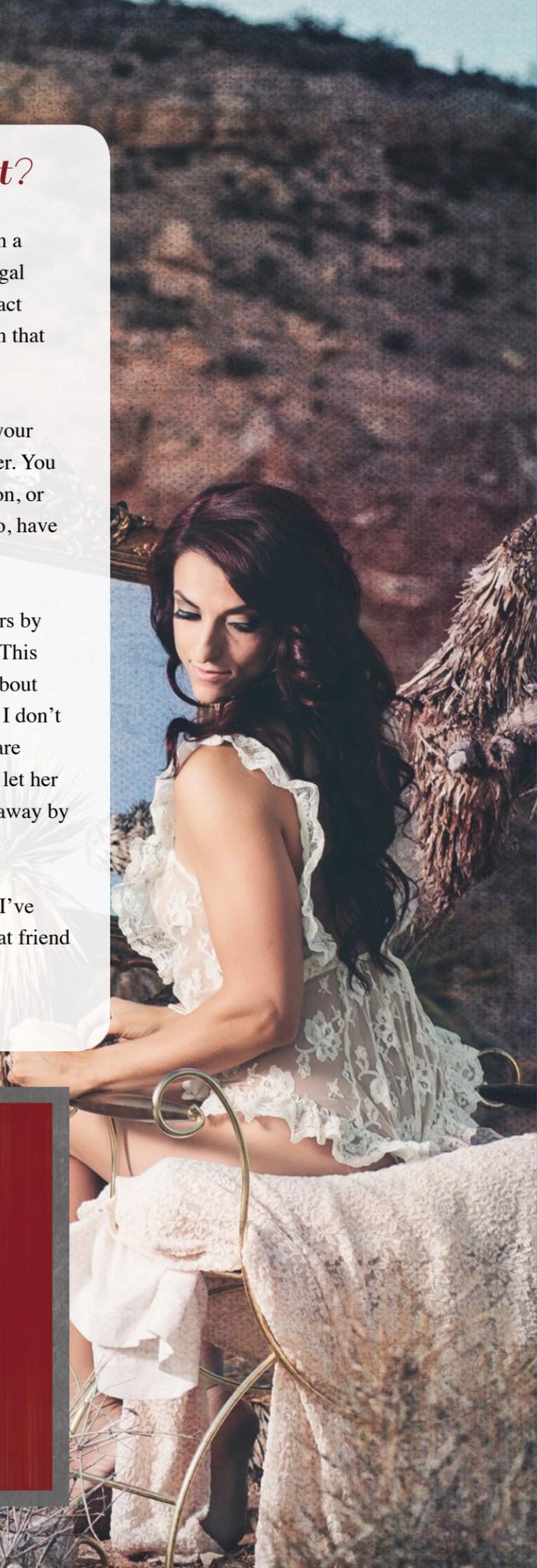
I Have a Spokesmodel. Now What?

Now it's time to get down to business. Have your spokesmodel sign a contract and model release form now. According to photography legal wiz Kirsten Kowalski, "If you have your spokesmodel sign a contract for a certain term (say one year), then you can include the release in that contract, and you do not need a separate release for each session."

Sit down with your team and your new spokesmodel, and go over your marketing calendar. Brainstorm ideas for marketing content together. You may decide to do a special shoot for an upcoming holiday promotion, or even try out new poses or techniques together. But whatever you do, have fun! This is the beginning of a beautiful journey.

Be available and open to her ideas. Balance out your needs with hers by shooting ideas that she might want but you don't necessarily need. This is a partnership, remember, and it's just as much about her as it is about you and your business. I do this with my spokesmodel all the time. I don't necessarily need fashion- or fitness-related photographs, but these are topics that are close to her heart that I know will make her happy. I let her style her first shoot (on the Fourth of July) herself, and was blown away by what she brought to the table.

Having a spokesmodel has been one of the best business decisions I've made. My creativity has soared to new levels. And I've made a great friend in the process. ■



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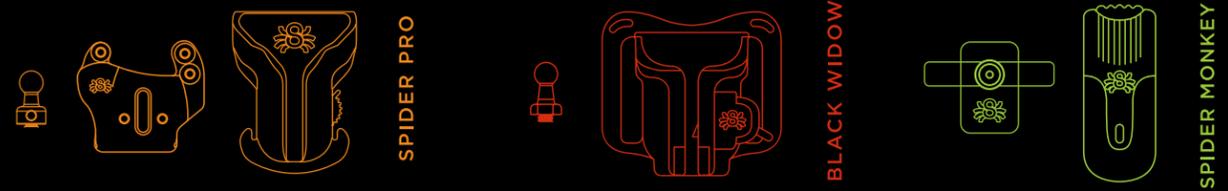
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**PICTURE
PERFECT**
CRITIQUE

WITH ROBERTO VALENZUELA



© Robert Roscigno



© Shannon Byrne



BY ROBERTO VALENZUELA

I have always been an advocate for the invaluable educational opportunity that image critique can bring. **I think it's one of the very best ways to understand your work.** Having your photos critiqued can bring to the surface both weaknesses and strengths you might not even know are there. Equipped with this knowledge, you can work on those aspects that need fine-tuning. Most of the issues with images fall into four main categories: technical, location, background and pose/expression.

Every month, I will critique images chosen by Shutter from reader entries.

The best part is that I will critique them on video, and use PhotoShop to draw callouts to show you where the issues lie. It'll be as if we were sitting in the same room going over your images together. I love this industry, and I have dedicated many years to pushing my fellow photographer friends to invest in their education and prioritize their skills and mastery of the art. ■

>>WATCH FACEBOOK.COM/BTSHUTTER FOR OUR CALL TO SUBMIT IMAGES NEXT MONTH!<<



© Ryan Eda Photo



KRISTIAN KAPON

© Shoot Raw

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QUESTIONS

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- + Pricing: where to start?
- + Is Facebook becoming a dinosaur in the social media world?
- + Defining your client when running monster sales
- + Pricing small guest list weddings
- + When disaster strikes: how to keep your cool and maintain morale
- + Hiring a makeup artist for out-of-state shoots
- + Husband and wife teams: shooting your own weddings
- + Tips for landscape photography
- + Making your pricing timeless: is it possible?

YOU'VE GOT
QUESTIONS?
WE'VE GOT
ANSWERS

The logo for 'SHUTTER MAGAZINE' is displayed in a white box with a dark border. To the left of the word 'SHUTTER' is a large white play button icon. To the right of 'SHUTTER' is a camera lens graphic. Below the word 'SHUTTER' is the text 'WATCH Q&A WITH SAL NOW!' in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. The word 'MAGAZINE' is written vertically in a small font to the right of 'SHUTTER'.

Q & A

WITH

Salvatore Cincotta

GOT MORE QUESTIONS?

Every month we will have a call for questions on our Facebook page and Sal will answer them with real-world advice.



INSPIRATIONS

Inspiration comes to us in many shapes & sizes

Put 10 photographers in a room and ask them to shoot a paperclip, and there's no telling what will happen. And that, ladies and gentlemen, is why I love being a photographer. We all see the world in our own special way. Ultimately, though, nothing is truly new or unique. Everything is inspired by something that came before. In that spirit, this month we asked you, our readers, to submit some work you thought would inspire your peers. What you gave us blew away the staff here. *Enjoy!*



© Alex Logaiski



© Lucy Angleton Photography



© Alex Logaiski



— ON THE COVER —

Photographer | Adrian Farr
Model | Anna Konstantynowicz
Wardrobe Stylist | Abi Gray
Hair Stylist | Leanne Maddock
Makeup Artist | ArtLook 4U
Headpiece | Mystic Magic Masquerade







© Melissa Sigler



© Meg Heriot Photography



© Rafael Sotomayor



© Dawn Kelly Photography





Thank you to everyone who submitted this month
& a special congratulations to Adrian Farr
whose image we chose for our cover this month!

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MAR 8  **KEVIN TOOHEY // ORANGE, CA**
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SAL CINCOTA // O'FALLON, IL
HANDS-ON SENIOR BOOTCAMP  **MAR 24/25**
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MAR 30  **MIKE MORELAND // ROSWELL, GA**
CREATIVE EDGE SAFARI: NATURE WORKSHOP
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BROOKS INSTITUTE // SANTA BARBARA, CA
SPORTS PHOTOGRAPHY  **JUN 7**
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SHOOT TO SELL // A MAD MEN INSPIRED 60'S SHOOT
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DYNAMIC ILLUMINATION
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+ KRISTY DICKERSON
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WORKING WITH

YOUR SPOUSE

WITH BLAIR PHILLIPS

BY BLAIR PHILLIPS



IS IT FOR YOU?

Everyone puts their own unique spin on the idea of working with a spouse. Some add an expletive when asked if they could work with their spouse. To some, the idea is a total nonstarter that would only serve to complicate their life and business. I've been working with my wife for nine years, and I love it. It's not for everyone. It takes the right two personalities. Employees can have a vested interest in your photography business, but no one will work as hard as your spouse. Executed properly, this type of working relationship can add tremendous value to your business and marriage.

Having my wife here with me is a real asset since I photograph so many seniors. She helps the girl seniors with their wardrobes, which frees me from any liabilities. But that's just one factor that makes it work for us.

Our dynamic happens to work perfectly because we started our business together. When we started out, we first evaluated our strengths and weaknesses. I knew I would handle the photography because I was good at it. She had more computer experience than I did, so she began tackling Photoshop. One of the biggest hurdles to working with your spouse can be knowing your role and recognizing your strengths. Focus on what you're good at, and delegate the rest. This way you are never fighting for control of anything.



SHUTTER KAMAZINE
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A red rectangular overlay containing a white play button icon on the left, the word "SHUTTER" in large white letters, "KAMAZINE" in smaller white letters to its right, and the text "LEARN MORE! CHECK OUT THIS VIDEO..." below.



SHARING THE WORKLOAD

If both people involved are not photographing, one person will become more of the “front man,” or the face of the business. This is where a lot of husband-wife teams have trouble. It’s very important to always compliment your spouse to others, and make sure your spouse knows how vital he or she is to the business. This is a great motivator that keeps morale high. Never take the role of a boss over your spouse. Even if you are more involved, always treat it as though you pull equal amounts of weight. I travel the country teaching photography, and always open my lectures by saying how important my wife is to me and our business. It only takes a second to do so, but it goes a long way with her.

Common wisdom says marriage is 50/50. I totally disagree with that. In a perfect world, a business and marriage partnership would require only 50 percent of you. There may be days that your spouse requires 80 percent of you. There may be days that require 100 percent of you and zero percent from your spouse.

Several times a year, I build and replace sets at my studio. This is an area where I have had to learn to give up some control. I have always been in control of all set design. Recently my wife began putting some things together without my knowledge, and I have had to learn to accept it. I may not always be in love with everything she does, but I learn to like it. As creative people, sometimes we are quick to judge, but often if you sit back and give something a chance, it grows on you. Working with my wife has made me more passive. The length of the day may require one of you to be more passive than the other. In every situation, listen to and value your spouse’s opinion before automatically rejecting it.

SETTLING THE DETAILS

One of the most important lessons I have learned over the past nine years is to be on the same page with my wife regarding policies. This is especially important if you have other employees. Employees can act just like children, and sometimes play one against the other. If you allow this to happen, the results of that may follow you home to be resolved. Setting policies can be hard. Pick a few issues at one time, and invest all your energy into only those few policies until you resolve them. There will be several things you may have to compromise on, but it's better that way. Not having policies in place is a surefire way to start all kinds of turmoil. Something that may not be important to one may be important to the other. Once you have policies in place, make a habit of never breaking them.

Being with your spouse every moment of the day is an awesome experience, but it's healthy to have a few hobbies of your own outside of work. You need some solo time to balance life, work and love. We find it healthy to have one day a week when we do our own thing. This is your day to pursue your hobby, go shopping, run errands or whatever you may choose.

On the business side of things, such as taxes, payroll and licensing, it is very important for both parties to be involved. One of you will become more involved and take the reins here. But that doesn't mean the other person doesn't need to know what's happening on the business end. Each partner must fully understand every legal and business angle. In most cases, two heads are better than one, and you can keep each other from making big mistakes.



If you work with your spouse, it is inevitable that you are going to have a few issues here and there. There will come a day when you bring a personal issue from home with you. This is an area where you must use a ton of self-control and check those underlying issues at the front door. One of the worst things you can do is have a dispute with your spouse in front of employees. It's OK to disagree on things, just don't argue in front of employees about them. Serve as the example you want your staff and business to follow. If you or your spouse starts slipping at your duties, you'll pave the way for your staff to do the same.

Working with a spouse is not for everyone. But if you have what it takes, growing a business with the person you love is a rewarding experience. ■



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- 10 | Nikon 50mm f/1.4
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- 15 | Nikon SB800
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THE **CHALLENGES**

of being a

PUBLIC
SPEAKER

WITH SKIP COHEN



There are always three speeches

for every one you actually gave.

THE ONE YOU PRACTICED, THE ONE YOU GAVE & THE ONE YOU WISH YOU GAVE.

-Dale Carnegie



BY SKIP COHEN

I've written a lot over the years, including an article here in *Shutter*, about what it takes to be a speaker. It's a lofty goal. Most of you see it as being tied to fame and fortune. While it can be both, it requires an incredible amount of work, and is much heavier on the fame side than fortune.

I don't know of anybody in the industry who's made a living exclusively speaking, and that includes photographers doing tours, speaking at various conventions and doing their own workshops. Even photographers with their own DVDs and webinars still generate the bulk of their revenue from their client base.

Since this is March and we're nearing the end of convention and trade show season, it seems like a great time to talk about some of the pitfalls of being a speaker. Then I'll turn it over to some of the experts.

Let's start with some of the major fiascos I've seen photographers get into over the years.

+SELLING FROM THE PODIUM

If I had a nickel for every photographer who misread his audience and pitched his products before he left the podium, I could have retired years ago. It's really simple to understand: People come to your programs to learn something. If you want them to buy your products, get a booth! If a booth just isn't in your future, then a table in the back of the room is fine, but don't sell from the stage.

Years ago, a speaker's answer to a question set the tone for a lynch mob. His answer: "That's in the second video in my series, for sale in the back of the room." Silence fell over the room, and from that point on, this speaker had lost all credibility.

+TELLING YOUR LIFE STORY

No matter how dynamic you think your life story is, the audience isn't there to hear about it. People are there to learn something. There's nothing wrong with a short bio, three to five minutes, but that's it. You already have a reputation as an educator the minute somebody approves you to speak at the venue. Don't load up the launchpad with your success stories unless they're relevant to your presentation.

Here's a good example. I'm not a professional photographer, but having been president of two major companies, I know more than I let on. When starting a presentation, I usually reference some of my background because it's relevant to my marketing and business programs, but that's it, and rarely more than two or three minutes.

Don Blair is the only one I know who could get away with a long-winded opening. We used to laugh because it seemed like he started thanking his third-grade teacher, and moved forward from there. After 10 minutes, he was still thanking the companies that sponsored him, but here's the thing about Don: He was one of the most-loved educators in photography, essentially everybody's grandfather, and he never heard a question he didn't take time to answer.

+ANSWER THEIR QUESTIONS

Leave time at the end of your presentation to answer questions, but more importantly, have the knowledge to answer them correctly. There's nothing worse than a speaker who doesn't answer questions and then, when she does, answers them wrongly!

And that's one of the biggest pitfalls for many photographers speaking today: They know a particular aspect of imaging, but have trouble answering many of the questions they're asked. You need to be an expert on more than just the title of your program—you've got to know the business.

Several times over the years, I've seen some great speakers crash and burn because they spent so much time on the speaking circuit that they stopped working with real clients, and grew out of touch with the major challenges of business. In the end, they became irrelevant because they weren't in the real world dealing with the challenges each of you face every day.

+COMEDIAN OR EDUCATOR?

I'll be the first to admit I love a good laugh from my audience when presenting, but I also know that content is king. Every now and then, I sit in on a program that goes from bad to worse because the speaker is simply inappropriate and starts dropping bombs, one after another.

There's no room for smut from the podium, and there's nothing that can get an audience to turn on you faster. I'm not saying you can't get away with it once in a while, but this is about being professional and sharing your passion to help people raise the bar on their skill set.

If you want to be Eddie Murphy, Chris Rock or Lewis Black, get booked at a comedy club. Keep your humor PG-rated and limited to things that are honestly funny and that relate to your subject matter.

Now let's look at some great educators/speakers to see what they have to add.



[1] MICHELECELENTANO

I joke about Michele being proof that hyperactive kids grow up and get jobs. She's all energy in everything she does. Her presentation style is completely relaxed and loaded with sincerity, and she's not afraid to share some of her more serious photographic mistakes.

At a program for new photographers in Las Vegas several years ago, she opened with, "Twenty years ago I was right where most of you are now, wondering how long it was going to be before my work didn't suck!" She then proceeded to share a half dozen of the worst wedding images I've ever seen—all taken at the first wedding she ever photographed.

Then she looked back over all the programs she'd done, and wondered aloud whether there was anything she wish she'd known right from the beginning.

"I wish I'd known to just speak fully from my heart and tell stories that help engage the audience," she said. "To speak with the people sitting in those seats, not at them. Most importantly, you must know what an honor and privilege it is to have the opportunity to give back what was given to you, to teach and inspire new photographers to grow and be better than they were before you met them."

I wanted to take it one step further and jump right to the current scene, with her thoughts on the biggest challenge for speakers today.

"Without question, it's getting newbies to understand the value of live, hands-on education!" she said.

We talked a little about this, and I made an observation. There are people out there who think they can learn it all from online education. I love how much is available today online, on DVDs and in books, but you can't learn to be a great photographer watching only videos anymore than you can learn to drive a car without ever getting behind the wheel.

Next on my list is my good buddy Matthew Jordan Smith. Matthew is one of the finest commercial beauty and editorial photographers in the industry. He's got a great speaking style, very laidback, giving you time to really soak in what he's talking about. He's a firm believer in the importance of building relationships with each client. Over and over again, his client relationships have proved to be one of his key building blocks.

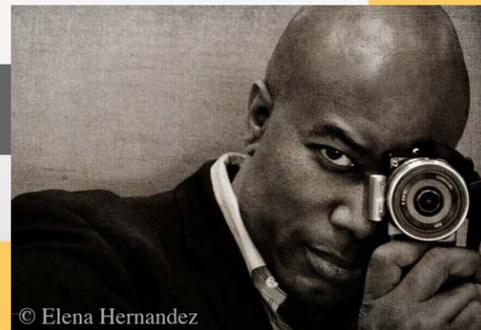
He didn't have a lot of time to talk, so I went right to my big question: "What do you wish you knew before you started teaching and speaking?"

"First, don't go beyond three major points in any presentation," he said. "When you hit more than three, your presentation gets too busy and you lose your audience. Second, you've got to be entertaining. That doesn't mean you've got to be funny, just interesting. Third, remember that people have come to hear information to help them, not to hear how good you are."

He jumped all over my second question: "What's the biggest challenge of being a speaker/educator today?"

"You've got to be an authority on the topic, not just popular. There are too many speakers out there now who don't have the depth of expertise in what they're talking about."

[2] MATTHEW JORDAN



[3] TONY CORBELL

When I first met Tony in the late eighties, he was working with Dean Collins. Tony was Dean's right hand, and when it came to public speaking, nobody did it better. Over the years, Tony took what he learned in his early days with Dean and added his own style. While his passion is lighting, there isn't anything in photography he can't talk about, and keep your attention while doing it.

When I asked him about things he wished he'd known when he first started speaking, he had a great answer.

"That's easy!" he said. "I wish I'd known how small the industry is. Everything you say gets spread to everybody. So you'd better know what you're talking about, or you'll get busted. I know this sounds pretty negative, but believe it or not, there are people who will be delighted to see you fail. You've got to simply know what you're talking about and give great presentations."

And what did he think was the biggest challenge facing speakers today?

"Not staying relevant and not paying attention to the market," he said. "I teach light. I've always taught light, but I'm going to talk about how it's used today, not how we used to do it, because nobody cares. I want people to feel it's a worthwhile thing to do and be able to relate to it with the challenges they're facing right now."

It takes dedication and an unswerving commitment to be the best. There are no compromises in the quality of a presentation. Dale Carnegie is quoted as once saying, "There are always three speeches for every one you actually gave. The one you practiced, the one you gave and the one you wish you gave."

Stay focused on having no regrets. Make sure you know your topic cold. Let your audience feel your enthusiasm, and make yourself habit-forming. Make your presentations so good that you never look back saying, "You know what I should have said?" ■

SHUTTER MAGAZINE

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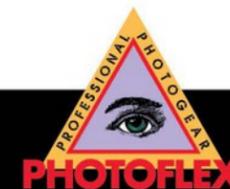


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— **AVOID** —
BEING A
“FAUXTOGRAPHER”
with Kristy Dickerson



by Kristy Dickerson



A member of my online photography group recently asked if any of us identified as a “fauxtographer.” What the heck is that?

It’s someone who earns money doing photography, who has a photography website or fanpage, but, from a legal standpoint, does not have a legitimate business. It’s way more common than you may realize.

Urban Dictionary defines it as someone “who tries to jump on the photography band-wagon by ‘Pointing-and-shooting’ hundreds of terrible pictures, which they will upload to myspace in an album titled ‘My Photography,’ ‘My Art,’ or ‘Critique My work.’ Always followed up by the person adding ‘Photography’ to their General section, or adding ‘Photography is my life...’ to their About Me.”

The question posed to my photography group caught me a little off guard. “Fauxtographer” doesn’t seem like something anyone would aspire to. Who’s going to admit to being that? Of course, the goal of this person was to help those who are not legitimately in business, but the way it was asked and the way people responded made me feel bad for those who may have felt embarrassed fessing up to their faux status. Then someone posted, “Perhaps we won’t hear from those who are not legitimate.”





I know a lot of people don't like the "new photographers" (another name for fauxtagraphers), but it seems that the people complaining about them are probably suffering in some way. It's like there's a band of photographers trying to bat down instructors, newbies or anything else they can. It's almost comical. If the complainers would step back and look at their own business, refocus some energy, where would our industry be and where would their own business be?

I have been in the business, with a business license, for almost five years. I have filed four tax returns for my company. I have a formal education in business finance, so the year I bought my first DSLR in hopes of starting a business, I set up my company just a few short months later to take advantage of the tax write-offs. As something of a newbie myself, I remember what it was like to want so badly to have a profitable photography business.

Our industry is in a bubble, and veteran photographers seem to think this phenomenon of new entrants into the market is only in photography, but of course that's not the case. There's a constant stream of newcomers in every industry. It's more helpful to focus instead on other factors that may be affecting your bottom line.

“FAUXTOGRAPHER”

Resist feeling threatened if you fit the bill for a fauxtographer. Instead, make a plan to get on the right career track. Running a “business” without the proper legal paperwork and protection can be a recipe for disaster. The haters are probably not going to change. But you have the power to change how you do business. Here are a few basic things to keep in mind as you start your business.

- >> You need legal protection.
- >> You should be taking tax write-offs to get more money back from Uncle Sam.
- >> You need to have limited liability for your personal assets, and to protect you and your family.

Let’s look at each of these factors more closely.

START A LEGAL BUSINESS.

This is your first line of defense in separating your personal assets from your business. Talk to an attorney who is familiar with your state’s laws, and discuss which option is right for you. Your business can be an LLC, corporation, DBA or sole proprietor. For a majority of photographers, the best option is an LLC. This is a limited liability company that separates your business liabilities. My attorney recommended using [LegalZoom.com](https://www.legalzoom.com), which I did. When I last checked, the site charged \$99 plus state fees to set up a business. Be sure to set up an EIN number. It’s easy to do, and you’ll be able to use your EIN rather than your social security number on business documents.



MEET WITH AN ACCOUNTANT.

On average, it takes three to five years for a small business to see profit. So while you are investing in equipment, branding, training, networking and marketing, you can write off this spending as business expenses. If your expenses outweigh your income, you'll actually get a refund. That is likely to happen the first couple of years in business. Set up a separate bank account, get a separate credit card and set up a way to organize your books. If this task overwhelms you, get help. An accountant can help get the ball rolling, and once they're set up, keeping your books in order is actually really easy.

GET INSURANCE.

Another necessity is liability insurance for you, your company and anyone who represents you. All the horror stories I've heard involved lack of insurance. Here are a few of those scenarios.

- >> You're shooting a wedding, and have to run to the bathroom. You get back to discover an expensive piece of gear has been stolen.
- >> You're shooting a wedding, and all your SIM cards are filled up. You put another SIM card in, and realize it has not been formatted yet. You format the card, clearing all data, shoot the rest of the event, and then realize at the end of the night all the ceremony pictures are missing because they were on that card you formatted by accident. (You should develop a method of formatting, storing and organizing cards to prevent this.)
- >> You're shooting a family session. You ask the family to do something fun, and a kid gets hurt.

All of these scenarios could end in lawsuits, damaged reputations or loss of personal assets. Why would you risk it? Why would you jeopardize your future? If you are married and have kids, why would you jeopardize their future?

Why would you risk it?
**Why would you jeopardize
your future?**

“FAUXTOGRAPHER”

I don't like the term *fauxtographer*. I just think everyone is in different stages of the learning process. I studied business and came from the corporate world, which is vastly different from our industry. We all have different strengths and weaknesses, but at the end of the day, you are your own competitive advantage. Seasoned and new photographers both should focus on that.

Technology is going to keep getting better and new photographers are going to keep coming into our industry, which will continue to raise the bar for photography businesses. ■

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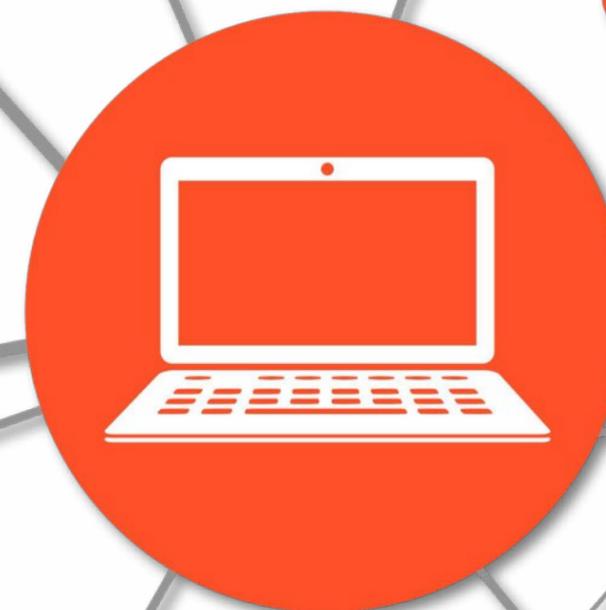
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EVER CHANGING SEO

(SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION)

WITH JUSTEN HONG



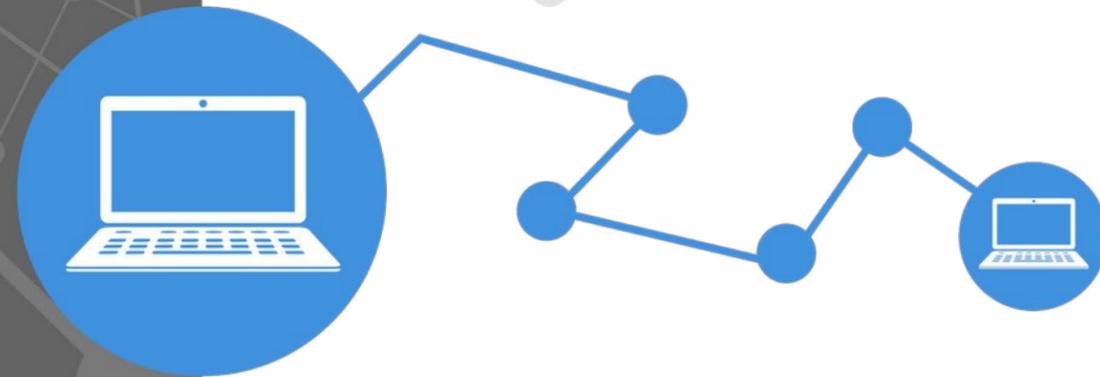
BY JUSTEN HONG



Search engine optimization (SEO) and the variables that control the ranking of websites and pages are constantly changing. Google's algorithm, the system that dictates which webpages show up in searches, and in what order, is constantly being altered. The changes are usually minor if you are doing the right things and practicing "white hat" SEO techniques, such as creating quality content and acquiring high-quality links from topical websites. But there are other variables that are constantly shifting, and if you want to get or stay at the top for your selected search terms, you need to stay on top of these changes.

Google's latest algorithm, named Hummingbird, hurt a lot of websites. Most of those that took a big hit were sites that purchase link building services from SEO companies that provide low-quality links with the exact same anchor text. So if you were targeting the term "St. Louis Wedding Photographer" and you used one of these services that provided links from low-quality websites with the link "St. Louis Wedding Photographer" pointing to your website, you were now penalized for doing so. Google has caught on to this shady technique, as it always eventually does when people try to fool the algorithm. Google's now looking for more organic links, like "click here..." and especially your brand name/domain name, since they are more natural.

If you purchased links and your website used to rank well, but it recently disappeared, Hummingbird was probably the cause. How can you fix this? You can try to have those links removed. Failing that, Google has a disavow tool in its Webmaster tools collection that tells the algorithm to ignore those links.



OTHER HUMMINGBIRD CHANGES & RESPONSIVE WEB DESIGN

As technology changes, so does Google. A prime example of this are the changes with Hummingbird. Essentially, all Google wants to provide is the best search results. A quality user experience is now a more important ranking factor, and I believe it will hold even more weight in the future. What makes a good user experience? You already know. A fast-loading website with easily readable content, no matter what type of device you are viewing it on, is essential. This brings up responsive web design. This is a relatively new concept in web design. It was first introduced around 2010, but didn't really take hold until last year. My company tries to stay ahead of the curve, and we are just now starting to build sites this way. Even companies like Apple haven't incorporated it yet.

Websites built on responsive design have pages with only one source code. By using styling, it automatically adjusts text size, images and structure, depending on the type of device. Google prefers this to merely a mobile-friendly site. Visit www.myaccidentlaw.com to see an example of a responsive-designed site. Viewing it on your desktop computer, grab the bottom right edge of the browser window and start to shrink the width of the window. You'll see the site adjust to it, automatically shifting structure at two points, from tablet to smartphone size. Since we converted this site to responsive, it has climbed two full pages in Google's search results.

Site speed (how fast a site loads) has also acquired more real estate with Google's latest algorithm. As mobile web surfing continues to increase, Google has made it more important to have a fast-loading website. This is super important to photographers. Your images need to be sharp, but more importantly, the smallest file sizes possible must maintain their quality. There are now services and plugins like Smushit that compress images even more than Photoshop's web saving feature.

Google has also cracked down on duplicate content and keyword stuffing. A year or two ago, Sal was on creativeLive and invited fellow photographers to use some of his text and other content from his website. If you took him up on this offer, I would highly recommend changing that text to be completely original. If your site hasn't been penalized for it yet, it may soon, especially if you just changed the company name and location, since Google can read sentence structure.

For pages you are trying to optimize, I recommend using your main targeted keyword phrase in the page title, meta description, in your H1 and H2 tags, and about four other times toward the top third of your page. You should also sprinkle some of those terms throughout the rest of the page. Making a couple of them bold or italic can also help, but just a bit. Strive for 300 to 400 words on these pages. I also recommend getting away from using your keywords more than one time in the title tag. I still see sites rank well for this, but I think Google will start cracking down on it. Overall, the most important aspect of your copy is that it read like standard English.

You can read Google's official statement on keyword stuffing at <https://support.google.com/webmasters/answer/66358?hl=en>.

NEW TIPS FOR BLOGGING

In your blog, you need to stop using your main targeted search term for every post title. Mix it up. Don't use the same keywords every single time. You also need to start writing a good-quality, copy-heavy article, ideally of 300 to 400 words, every so often. It needs to be original, of course, and related to your field. If you are a wedding photographer, for example, you might write an article about your favorite locations for photos, the best wedding venues or what to wear for engagement shoots. The goal is threefold: to let visitors know you are an expert, provide them with information they'll want to share and to create a database of keyword-rich content on your site. Lastly, using your keywords, link to other pages on your site; internal link building is also a Google ranking factor.



GOOGLE'S WEBMASTER TOOL

Google's Webmaster Tool is a service that provides detailed information on your website, including any problems with it. This tool is a must for search optimization. It's free, and all you need to do is authenticate your site to see the wealth of information it collects.

We mentioned the disavow tool above, but Webmaster Tools provides much more than that. It provides linking information, crawl errors, search query data, HTML improvements and warnings if your site is having problems. It now has PageSpeed Insights under the Other Resources tab. This tells you how fast your site loads on both a desktop and a mobile device. In conjunction with Google Analytics, these tools are priceless.

GOOGLE'S AUTHORSHIP UPDATE

Since my last article, in which I discussed how to set up Google Authorship (having your picture show up in search results), a couple of things have changed. Google is now being more selective in displaying authorship in results, and I've noticed it has quit working altogether in many instances. It helps tremendously if you add the text "by [your name]" to your post or on the pages you want Authorship to show up on. I have added it to blogs posted by date, like so: "Posted on Friday, February 14th, 2014 by Justen Hong." I made my name a link back to my Google+ account, which seems to help also. You need to use the same name that you use on Google+ since it doesn't like nicknames or different versions of the name (like David vs. Dave). I also think your Google+ activity may have something to do with it, so make sure you are posting to it and +1-ing content you like on a regular basis. ■



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SALCINCOTTA
www.SalCincotta.com

LOCATION: O'Fallon, IL

PASSION: Weddings & Seniors

Sal was exposed to photography at a very early age and has been in love with our craft ever since. He can still recall the smell of the chemicals in his aunt's makeshift dark room in the basement. However, a career in photography would elude him for over 20 years.

Graduating from one of the top 25 business schools in the country, Sal pursued a corporate career with his photography becoming more of a hobby. In 2007, he left corporate to pursue his dream of a career in photography and has never looked back.

Today, Sal Cincotta and his wife Taylor own and operate a very successful studio in the St. Louis metro area. Salvatore Cincotta Photography, Salvatore Cincotta Films, and BehindtheShutter.com.

Focused on wedding and senior portraiture, Sal has had the opportunity to shoot for corporate clients like Nordstrom's and the St. Louis Cardinals to elite sports celebrities and the White House, photographing President Obama.

FEATURED ARTICLES

Top 10 Most Influential
Q&A with Sal Cincotta





DAMIANBATTINELLI

www.damianbattinelli.com

LOCATION: Plattsburgh, NY

PASSION: Composites

In 1995, my father bought me a 35mm SLR. We drove down to NYC to pick up the camera and I will never forget walking past the twin towers and looking up. I remember almost falling over trying to look up! They were massive. I would have never, in my wildest dreams, known that those same towers would have such an impact on me one day.

I took photography all through high school in Peru, NY. Developing, enlarging, dodging, and burning. I was smitten. I also attended Champlain Valley Educational Services (CV-TEC) for graphic design in Plattsburgh, NY. This is where I would find another passion, design! I was introduced to Adobe Photoshop. I learned that if I scanned images into a computer, I could manipulate them.

I graduated from Peru in 1999 and entered the military one month later as a graphic designer at the 105thAW, Stewart ANG in Newburgh, NY. I attended Defense Information School (DINFOS) at Ft Meade, MD. Only a few short years later, I met up with those same towers from years earlier, no longer massive but scattered at my feet. I spent 2 weeks at ground zero days after the attacks. Fast forward several years, 13.5 years of service to be exact, I exited the military.

By this time, my knowledge of digital photography, design, and editing were strong. I was able to take my love of art and photography to a new level and launched my business. I am still learning and growing as a photographer/artist and embrace this rebirth with open arms.

I am an Associate and Mentor for Peter Hurley's PH2PRO

FEATURED ARTICLES

Photoshop: Makeup Brushes





SKIP COHEN

www.SkipsPhotoNetwork.com

LOCATION : Sarasota, Florida

Skip Cohen is President/Founder of Marketing Essentials International, a marketing consulting firm specializing in projects dedicated to photography, primarily photographic education. (www.mei500.com)

He is also the founder of Skip's Summer School (www.mei500.com), the founder of the Akron Photo Series (www.AkronPhotoSeries.com), and the co-founder of GhostRighters (www.GhostRighters.com), a content resource for professional photographers needing help with editorial content, web re-design and marketing. His blogs, SkipsPhotoNetwork.com and PhotoResourceHub.com, is read by thousands of professional and aspiring photographers. On May 21, MEI launched PhotoResourceHub.com a new content site for professional photographers with video, podcasts, blog posts and an ongoing calendar of industry events.

He has been a recipient of ADL's Torch of Liberty Award and Foto Imagen Magazine's Man of the Year Award and in 2001 he received PPA's Legacy Award for his work in support of PPA Charities. His images have been published in a long list of photographic trade magazines, including: Rangefinder, Shutterbug, Foto Imagen, Studio Photography and Design, Petersen's Photographic and The Hasselblad Forum. He's also competed in print completion in both WPPI and PPA's national conventions.

In addition, he has written six books on photography: The Art of Wedding Photography, The Art of the Digital Wedding and The Art of People Photography with Bambi Cantrell: Don Blair's Guide to Posing and Lighting Body Parts: and Wedding Photography from the Heart, co-authored with celebrity wedding photographer Joe Buissink. Book number six, GoingPro, co-authored with Scott Bourne, was released by Random House in October 2011 and remains on the photography book best seller list at Amazon..

FEATURED ARTICLES

Challenges of Being a Public Speaker



MICHAEL CORSENTINO

www.CorsentinoPhotography.com

LOCATION: Petaluma, California

PASSION: Lifestyle Photography

Michael Corsentino is an award-winning, contemporary wedding and portrait photographer. He is an American Photo 2013 Top 10 Wedding Photographers nominee, Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Lightroom expert, Capture One Pro Certified Professional, author, contributing writer for Photoshop User Magazine, Shutter Magazine and Resource Magazine, speaker and international workshop leader.

Based in Northern California, Michael has been shooting digitally since 1999. His love affair with the magic and science of photography is more passionate today than ever. Stylish, dramatic, edgy and modern images set Michael's photography apart. His award-winning photojournalism, fashion and editorial styles have made him an in-demand portrait and destination-wedding photographer. Passionate about education, Michael loves to share his lighting and posing secrets, post-processing techniques, time-saving workflow strategies and shooting philosophy at workshops and speaking engagements.

FEATURED ARTICLES

Don't Be a Square





STACIE FRAZIER

www.HauteShots.com

LOCATION: Henderson, Nevada

PASSION: Boudoir

Stacie began her journey as a graphic designer, who needed to learn photography for her duties as a designer, in 2004. The first photo Stacie ever took in her career as a designer was published in Lucky magazine, which catapulted her into taking photography more seriously. She ventured into boudoir photography in 2009 with the launch of her business, Haute Shots, and rapidly gained acclaim as a true professional in her field with the ability to bring out the beauty in every woman, no matter her age, shape, or size. Since then, Stacie has built a loyal and diverse international clientele.

Stacie is the Boudoir Expert for MpixPro, has been featured in "Boudoir Photography: The Quick-Start Guide For Professional Photographers" by Ed Verosky and "Canon Speedlite System Digital Field Guide" by Michael Corsentino, as well as numerous magazines and reality tv show sizzle reels. The future is looking bright for Haute Shots as more and more opportunities present themselves to Stacie, enabling her to share her passion for boudoir with the World.

FEATURED ARTICLE

Building Your Brand With a Boudoir Spokesmodel



**JUSTEN HONG**www.VisualLure.com

LOCATION: Caseyville, IL

PASSION: Logo Design

Justen Hong is a St. Louis area-based, award-winning, internationally published graphic designer with works in multiple LogoLounge books, The Big Book of Packaging, plus logos that will soon be featured in a new book published by Artpower International publishing out of Hong Kong. Justen is the owner and head designer at Visual Lure®, which specializes in logo design, graphic design, web design, search engine optimization (SEO) and packaging design, with his true passion being logo design. Justen has a studio art background with a degree in graphic design and a printmaking minor. He also loves art, photography and architecture.

FEATURED ARTICLES

Ever Changing SEO



KRISTY DICKERSON

www.KristyDickerson.com

LOCATION: Atlanta, Georgia

PASSION: Weddings & Engagements

Kristy Dickerson is the founder and CEO of Fisheye Connect (www.fisheyeconnect.com), professional laundry sorter, CFO of multitasking, wedding photographer, mom of two, and a wife who is never wrong... never. Upon earning her degree in finance and business management, she started her photography business after the birth her first son. As if she didn't already have enough on her plate, in June 2010, Kristy launched Fisheye Connect for other photographers, like herself, looking for quality education. Fisheye Connect allows aspiring photographers to connect with photography industry experts by location, instructor or interest. It is a searchable database for photography workshops/ events, along with services that help instructors manage the marketing and financial aspects of their businesses. Merging Kristy's business sense with her passion, Fisheye Connect has become a thriving community of photographers learning and growing together.

FEATURED ARTICLES

Avoid Being a Fauxtographer





VANESSA JOY
www.VanessaJoy.com

LOCATION: Freehold, New Jersey

PASSION: Weddings

14 Years of photography, eight years of shooting weddings, three years of business ownership (not to mention five college degrees)

Vanessa is a trilingual (English, Spanish and a bit of French), award-winning photographer, living with her husband, Rob Adams, in the great state of New Jersey. She has studied photography since 1998 and has spent most of her life running a successful wedding photography studio that shoots 35 weddings a year (at a premium price). In her first three years of business, Vanessa achieved honors such as: 20+ publications in print magazines (including three cover photos and interviews in *PDN* and *Rangefinder*), a Grand Imaging Award from PPA and a second-place wedding Image Award from WPPI.

Vanessa enjoys speaking across the country at venues such as CreativeLIVE, Clickin Moms, WPPI, Imaging USA, PPA-related conventions and personal workshops. She is recognized for her talent and even more for her business sense. Vanessa's clients love working with her, and industry peers enjoy learning from her generous, informative and open-book style of teaching.

FEATURED ARTICLES
Getting The Most Out of Client Meetings



LORINORDSTROM

www.NordstromPhoto.com

LOCATION: Winterset, Iowa

PASSION:

Babies, Families, Weddings & Seniors

Lori Nordstrom {M.Photog.Cr., CPP, ABI} owns a boutique studio specializing in children and family portraits located in the picturesque town of Winterset, Iowa. Lori is a PPA approved business instructor and marketing consultant for Studio Management Services. Sharing with other photographers and small business owners is one of the things she most enjoys. In 2009 Lori started Photo Talk Forum, an online community of photographers working together to grow their businesses.

Lori has always had a heart for children and believes in giving back. She has run a successful fundraising campaign for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society (LLS) for 10 years. In 2011 Lori began her own non-profit organization, Dando Amor which focuses on helping orphaned children in Ecuador. Lori and Travis Gugleman hit their goal of raising \$100,000 the first year of Dando Amor existence. You can find out more about going to Ecuador or making a donation at www.dandoamor.org

FEATURED ARTICLE

Mini Sessions and Themed Events





BLAIR PHILLIPS

[wwwBlairPhillipsPhotography.com](http://www.BlairPhillipsPhotography.com)

LOCATION: Landis, North Carolina

PASSION:

Seniors, Babies, Families & Weddings

Blair's team includes four employees plus Blair, who photographs 20 to 30 weddings and 500 studio sessions per year. Blair has a passion to teach photographers how to express themselves in ways they can't find with traditional training. He speaks to and teaches thousands of photographers and digital artists each year at national conventions and expos including WPPI, Imaging USA, SYNC Seniors, and various PPA conventions.

Blair and Suzanne's "eclectic elegance" style and positive energy educate and inspire photographers, while allowing them to stay true to themselves. This young team pushes the envelope daily with creativity and positive inspiration. As a side note, after 10 years of marriage, Blair and Suzanne welcomed Ava Blair Phillips into the world on August 3, 2011.

FEATURED ARTICLE

Working With Your Spouse





ROBERTO VALENZUELA

www.robertovalenzuelaphotography.com

LOCATION: Beverly Hills, CA

Roberto Valenzuela is a wedding and fine art photographer based in Beverly Hills, CA. Roberto Valenzuela is a 70-time International award winning photographer and three-time International first place winner. He serves as a photography judge for the 16x20 WPPI (Wedding and Portrait Photographers International), PPA (Professional Photographers of America), and various European photography competitions. Roberto's private photography workshops and speaking engagements are held worldwide. His goal is to encourage and inspire professional photographers to practice their craft when not on the job, as any other artist must do so in order to perform. He is an active teacher and platform speaker at WPPI and has served as the keynote speaker at other International photography conventions.

FEATURED ARTICLES

Picture Perfect Critique



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