



iPhoneography

How to Create Inspiring Photos with
Your Smartphone

—
Michael Clawson

Apress®

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with Your Smartphone



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To three people that make my life complete; my wife, Patty, my daughter Tessa, and my son, Nicholas. To my late father and mother who taught me to believe in myself, and always dream.



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About the Author



Michael Clawson is ‘Chief Fish’ at Big Fish Creations, an advertising and digital media company in the Sierra town of Graeagle. His background began in Silicon Valley when Apple Computer and Adobe Systems first made their mark in desktop publishing. He was introduced to interactive media early in his career, transitioned to production artist, and later, creator and lead principal of an interactive department at a major Nevada advertising agency. Specializing in branding

across multiple media platforms, his diverse repertoire includes a hybrid combination of designer and developer with emphasis on graphic design, branding, photography and communication. As a speaker, Michael has presented at several industry-specific conferences including Adobe Max and MacWorld.

Michael began communicating as an iPhoneographer in late 2011 when he soon discovered the power wrapped inside his tiny telephone camera. As a professional photographer, he began to explore the limitations of the iPhone (and thus learned its strengths), and soon began to exploit various facets of his creativity with the device. He credits Instagram as the artistic sharing community where iPhoneography and art have flourished, giving him inspiration toward new opportunities and new discoveries. Michael often writes about iPhoneography and creative editing.

About the Technical Reviewer



Jim Babbage, Solutions Consultant, Education, Adobe Systems

Jim Babbage's two passions, teaching and photography, led him to his first career in commercial photography. With the release of Photoshop 2.5, Jim became involved in the world of digital imaging, and he soon began designing for the web in addition to taking photographs. Jim is the author of several books and video training titles on Adobe Fireworks and Adobe Muse, and written hundreds of online articles and tutorials on Fireworks, Dreamweaver, Photoshop, and general web and photography topics.

A former college professor of 21 years, Jim taught imaging, web design, and photography at Centennial College, and web design at Humber College in Toronto, Ontario until he joined Adobe in May of 2011 as a Solutions Consultant for Education. Jim has spoken at a variety of technology conferences, including D2WC and Adobe MAX.

Learn more about Jim's passion for photography at <https://www.behance.net/JimBabbage>

And

https://www.flickr.com/photos/jim_babbage/



Acknowledgments

I think back to my first mobile phone which I bought around 1996. It was a Motorola. It was the size of a small brick, and had a pull-out walkie-talkie like antenna. It actually felt pretty cool in my hands, and was fun to carry around, but the reception was absolutely terrible, often full of static, distortion, and at times, completely unrecognizable voice transmission. Of course, it had no camera. Some time later I upgraded to a Nokia 6160. This was the first cellphone that I felt was a true mobile phone. It had amazing clarity, and many other features. However, it was not until I purchased a Motorola V551 cellphone that I experience a camera within a phone. It was a basic camera, only VGA quality, but it was the entry point toward my exploration in mobile photography.

A few years later, the iPhone was introduced, which changed my perception of what a mobile phone was really all about. Once I purchased it, I felt like Mr. Spock, holding a tricorder-like device – something much more than just a mobile phone. It inspired me to think and create beyond my boundaries. It was a game changer.

Thus, this book is inspired by my discoveries early on with my first iPhone. It is inspired by the many photography experiments I explored with my family and friends. But more so, it is inspired by so many who have shared my passion to create, and to present my vision of the world, sometimes in ways that maybe I can only understand.

But to really understand oneself means we have to let go of what we fear. In fact, this book would have never been published had I given up after the first publisher closed its division. I owe much to my agent, Carole Jelen, who stuck with me literally through thick and thin to make this new version of my book see the light of day with Apress.

I also owe so much to my family for staying frosty during the transition.

And, to all my friends and family who have supported my mobile photography explorations – from within my heart – I thank you immensely.



Introduction

We are creative beings – each one of us unique. We communicate through sight, through sound, through touch. The world around us is analog, yet in this modern age, we often express who we are in a digital way. In the beginning, that way was basic, limited, and somewhat restraining. The tools kept many of us from achieving true freedom through simplicity, binding us to technical things like the keyboard and mouse. Those of us who mastered an understanding of these tools were able to enter this digital age, and explore creative ideas within the limits of that existing tech. Little did we know that an evolution of touch technology would bring us closer to intimate communication, and ultimately, creative freedom.

For me, my entry into the digital world began in 1987 while working at an Apple reseller store in Los Gatos, California, where I bought my first Macintosh Computer. It was a Mac SE, dual floppy drive, 1 megabyte of RAM, and a 3rd Party 46 megabyte hard drive. As a representative for the store, I received a pretty sweet deal. Yet, it was still a rather expensive investment. I remember thinking to myself, “I’ll never need anything more than what I have right now.” The power wrapped inside that bulky, portable computer, simply amazed me. I first used the SE in college. Later, I transitioned to music and graphics. In all three areas, the SE excelled, teaching me how easy it was to create using digital technology. Still, there were limits to what I could achieve with the tool. Speed, for example, hampered by the Motorola 68000 CPU, would constantly drag me to a standstill during complex creative projects involving sound and graphic design.

The mouse and keyboard, along with Apple’s graphical user interface, though seen as a technical revolution at the time, still limited the way I interacted with the device. I remember having to learn “mouse skills” like moving, dragging, and clicking. These skills that I took as second nature were often a barrier to the non-technical user. Admittedly, I was the self-entitled ‘nerd’ who could navigate these waters, making sense of how all

this new technology worked. Truth is, I was not alone. The graphical user interface and mouse technology that Apple pioneered shaped the creative industry for years to follow long after its introduction.

Today, touch technology plays a powerful role in shaping the way we use technology. Everything can now be achieved through a tap, swipe, or pinch, or more categorically referred to as “gestures,” which are more natural, and easier to grasp.

About This Book

iPhoneography: How to Create Inspiring Photos with Your Smartphone details the essence of what I call the inspiring and intimate touch of creativity through iPhoneography, which is the process of taking and editing photos exclusively with your iPhone or similar device. The technical wall of the computer screen, separated by the mouse and keyboard, is no longer relevant as we move deeper into touch screen technology. From this evolution, the mind is free to connect faster in much the same way as a painter connects with the canvas, or a musician connects with the instrument.

THIS BOOK WAS WRITTEN for the curious photographer who is looking for inspiration, and new ways of expressing their vision with iPhoneography. It's for the artist in us all, exploring new pathways and connections into mobile art. *iPhoneography: How to Create Inspiring Photos with Your Smartphone* is a perfect source for creativity and insight into the growing iPhoneography and mobile art movement. Readers will gain an understanding of the methods used in photography and iPhoneography, including the connection between the iPhone and the artist, as well as practical tips and techniques for creating and sharing photos and art with an iPhone or similar device.

The Digital World Reshapes and Disrupts

Creativity is just connecting things. When you ask creative people how they did something, they feel a little guilty because they didn't really do it, they just saw something. It seemed obvious to them after a while. That's because they were able to connect experiences they've had and synthesize new things.

—Steve Jobs

The computer revolutionized desktop publishing and creativity. Here, I'll present a brief overview of how tools like Photoshop evolved, and how digital photography, once seen as limited, soon gained ground in many creative industries.

Part I will discuss the transformation from DSLR cameras and desktop editing to the iPhone and iPhoneography.



You don't take a photograph, you make it.

- Ansel Adams

The Digital Darkroom Is Born

Early Software and Hardware That Started The Digital Photography Revolution

I never experienced the original darkroom. That darkroom made of chemicals, papers, processing tanks, safe lights, enlargers, and the like. The first darkroom I experienced was digital, right inside my computer. In fact, it was a program actually named Digital Darkroom, which was created in 1987 by Silicon Beach Software. What made Digital Darkroom so special was its ability to edit gray-scale images, something Apple's MacPaint couldn't do at the time. Though Digital Darkroom was limited to black and white images, it set the stage for the transition from the "analog" darkroom into digital.

I remember playing with Digital Darkroom at the computer store where I worked during college in the late 1980s. (Figure 1-1) We had it set up on a Mac II with 4 MB of RAM, a 40 MB hard drive, an Apple 13 inch color monitor, and Apple Scanner. The equipment sprawled across an entire desktop, literally. A set up like this was not cheap; easily up to \$10,000. Far more expensive than a traditional darkroom at that time, and not as versatile when compared to its limited features for photo development, processing and editing. Yet, this was the new direction photography would evolve from in the years to follow.

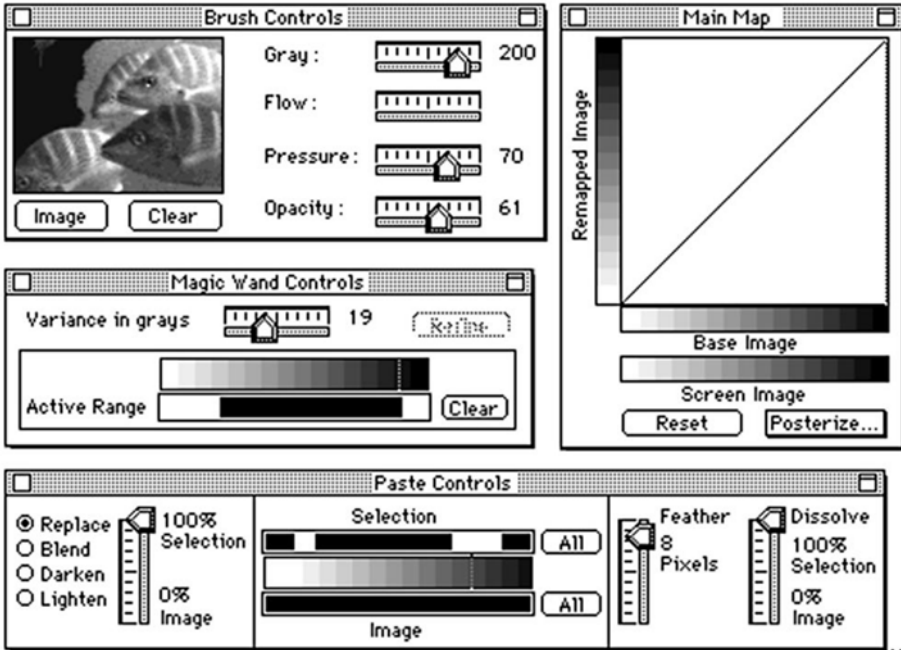


Figure 1-1. Dialog Box for Digital Darkroom. Source: MacTech

At that time, the process was simple: place a photo on the scanner and import it into the computer via scanning software. You would typically start with a preview scan in order to get a sense of your final result before you tweaked the settings and adjustments prior to the final import. And, you could only work with gray scale images, since the first scanners didn't support color scanning. On Macs that didn't support a higher gray scale or color display depth, the image was dithered in black and white (1-bit) on the display. You could still work with the image and make some adjustments, but it was difficult to get a true sense of what you had done to your image until you printed it out on something like an Apple LaserWriter PostScript printer.

From Display to Photoshop

Around the same time that Silicon Beach Software introduced Digital Darkroom, other companies like SuperMac, offered competing image processing apps. Also at that time, two brothers, Thomas and John Knoll, (Figure 1-2) whose father had taught them traditional dark room techniques in his basement darkroom, began exploring a program they first called Display.



Figure 1-2. John and Thomas Knoll. Source: Resource Magazine Online

It turns out that Thomas Knoll, who was studying image processing for his Ph.D. at the University of Michigan in the late 80s, was frustrated at the lack of display depth in the early 1-bit Macintosh computers, and therefore created a custom program on his Mac Plus to deal with this deficiency. Thomas' brother, John, who worked at Industrial Light and Magic (ILM), soon discovered that his brother's program shared similarities to the custom programs he used on the job. With this common bond, the brothers set out to develop a new program that they named, Display. John later purchased a Mac II workstation, which opened the doorway to the development of advanced imaging features like gamma correction, file format conversions, and tone adjustments (i.e. levels) just to name a few. It was not long before the two realized they actually had something in terms of a viable image-editing program, which set them on a course to sell their invention to a willing buyer.

As the program developed, the brother's changed the program's name to Image Pro, and began the hunt for investors. They approached many investors, including Adobe, who at the time, had no real interest in it. As a result, and after renaming the program again several times, they eventually found limited success with a company called BarneyScan, who bundled the software, now named Photoshop, with their BarneyScan XP. After their limited success with BarneyScan, Thomas and John approached Adobe again. They were fortunate enough to pique the interest of Russell Brown, Adobe's art director at the time, who immediately fell in love with the program, and pushed it forward for the company to acquire.

The World Wide Web Opens Doorways

In 1993, after I graduated college with a degree in Creative Arts, I moved north to the Reno area, where I sold computers for a Mom and Pop store. I spent my downtime on the showroom floor running through the tutorial exercises for Photoshop 3.0, to better understand how the program worked, and how to integrate it within my workflow. Every new technique I learned in Photoshop opened my eyes to the creative potential of the program. One area I paid particular attention to was file formats. I was familiar with the different types such as JPEG and GIF since I had been using those formats with a program called Director, which was made by Macromedia.

One day, my boss invited me to look at something on the computer screen. It literally felt like I was at a circus sideshow, and he was the shill, complete with the “hey kid, come here, take a look at this” grin. But, what he showed me that day was nothing to laugh about. It was the World Wide Web. It blew me away. Though I was familiar with online providers like AOL and Prodigy, the Web was different because I immediately understood its unlimited potential, its connectivity, and the technology under its hood, i.e., Hypertext Markup Language, better known as HTML. I trained myself to write the code and began to build mock web pages. With this new skill, I soon outgrew my present career and knew I had to venture to greener pastures.

My career path pointed me in the direction of advertising. My wife was the catalyst since she was currently enrolled at the University of Nevada, Reno in the college of journalism. She recommended I try for a job at a local ad agency. I was eager to give it a try, but lacked a proper advertising portfolio. So, I devised a clever solution—I created an interactive resume that I delivered on a floppy disc. It was a cutting edge approach that got me hired on the spot as a production artist, and presentation specialist, that is, the artist in charge of building the computer generated presentations the agency used to pitch clients like MGM Grand and Silver Legacy. This new career placed me in the driver’s seat of digital creation, where I soon began to hone my skills as a digital artist. Later, I lead the Internet Web Division for the agency, building small websites for their clients, thus furthering my skillset.

The reality of my new career didn’t hit me square in the head at first. Though I was humbled to be part of such a large agency, I was really at the tail end of the “traditional agency approach.” That approach involved old media like radio and print, and still relied heavily on darkroom film photography. In fact, I was amazed at the photographer who was employed by the agency; he was truly a genius, and understood the old-school method of the darkroom. In hindsight, it might have been fun to take some time, and learn the process from him. But I was a digital guy, and was driven by technology. To me, the writing was on the wall, and I believed it was only a matter of time before the technology could catch up with the industry. Of course, it didn’t happen overnight.