Photoshop Book Recommendations
for Photographers

Kevin Connery 11/2009
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Adobe Photoshop CS3 for Photographers
Adobe Photoshop CS4 for Photographers
A Professional Image Editor's Guide to the Creative Use of Photoshop

Martin Evening

Focal Press   *ISBN: 0240520289 (CS3), 0240521250 (CS4)*

Written by a full-time UK-based commercial and fashion photographer and CS3 alpha tester, this book covers issues most digital photographers face, from workflow issues, color management, color correction, and retouching. Additional issues for those going to press or offset printing, as well as infrared, cross-processing, and the like round out this guide.
Highly recommended. *Recommended as a first Photoshop book for a photographer, as well as intermediate-to-advanced users.*

The Creative Digital Darkroom

Katrin Eismann Sean Duggan, & Stephen Johnson

O'Reilly Media, 1/2008   *ISBN: 0-5961-0047-7*

This book is aimed primarily at the photographer who wants to learn how to set up a solid workflow to generate quality images with a smooth and effective process. The emphasis is on tone and contrast control and optimization, with large sections dealing raw conversion, dodging and burning, black and white optimization, and so-on. It spends very little time on retouching and compositing, but that exclusion works to the benefit of what IS covered.
Highly recommended *as a first Photoshop book for non-retouchers. Combined with Katrin's Photoshop Restoration and Retouching book (below), it's a very solid foundation to digital photography.*

Photoshop Restoration and Retouching

Katrin Eismann & Wayne Palmer

New Riders Publishing, 11/2006 (3rd edition)   *ISBN: 0-3213-1627-4*

Katrin is one of the leading Photoshop writer/experts today, and her books are all highly approachable. This one is an excellent guide to basic color correction, retouching, photo repair/restoration, and more.
Highly recommended. *Recommended as a first Photoshop book for retouchers, as well as intermediate-to-advanced users.*

Professional Photoshop: The Classic Guide to Color Correction

Dan Margulis

Wiley, 11/2006 (5th edition)   *ISBN: 032144017X*

In my own opinion, ***the*** *single best book on color correction and sharpening on the market today. It's not an easy read, but the techniques in this book should enable anyone to vastly improve the quality of their prints.*
VERY Highly recommended to anyone involved in image optimization.

Photoshop Masking & Compositing

Katrin Eismann

New Riders Publishing, 10/2004   *ISBN: 0-7357-1279-4*

A comprehensive (500+) page guide to masking and compositing. It clearly explains what you need to know about dealing with multiple images in a single, "final" image, in a very readable and approachable manner. (Stephen Romaniello's Photoshop CS3 Channels and Masks Bible *is a much weaker alternative.)*

The Photoshop CS3 Book for Digital Photographers
The Photoshop CS4 Book for Digital Photographers

Scott Kelby

New Riders Press (8/2007 CS3, 12/2008 CS4)   ISBN: 0321518675 (CS3), 0321580133 (CS4)

I'm not a fan of most of Scott Kelby's books—they're too recipe/cookbook oriented, and don't provide enough background info for real learning, but this is an exception. It's lighter in tone (and less in-depth) than Martin Evening's Adobe Photoshop CS3/4 for Photographers, but it covers much of the basics of what most photographers need to know about Photoshop.

Real World Camera Raw with Adobe Photoshop CS3
Real World Camera Raw with Adobe Photoshop CS4

Bruce Fraser & Jeff Schewe

Peachpit Press, 11/2007 (CS3) 12/2008 (CS4)   ISBN: 0321518675 (CS3), 0321580133 (CS4)

Whether you use Adobe's Camera Raw for your Raw conversion or not, this book covers how to get the most from Adobe's Bridge—CS3/4's file browser. It also deals with issues any photographer using RAW files should understand, from exposure, to camera calibration, workflow issues, metadata, and more.

Real World Image Sharpening with Adobe Photoshop CS2

Bruce Fraser

Peachpit Press, 7/2006   ISBN: 0321449916

A specialized book, but one which explains when, why, and how to sharpen images for best results. It says its for CS2, but there's no real changes in CS3/CS4 regarding this.

Real World Color Management

Bruce Fraser, Fred Bunting, Chris Murphy

Peachpit Press, 8/2004 (2nd Edition)   ISBN: 0321267222

In-depth guide to Color Management. It covers an increasingly important topic, but for most photographers, provides more information than is needed. It's also one of the few guides to the topic that's not filled with errors and/or overgeneralizations. It's tailored for those who expect to have to work with multiple printers and/or want to fine-tune their own printers to produce the absolute best images possible.

This is the guide if you want to master Color Management. If you just want a photography-specific guide, Tim Grey's Color Confidence may be a better choice; it's somewhat more approachable, albeit with less detail. I can't recommend Michael Kieran's Photoshop Color Correction; that one had too many errors from oversimplification.

Photoshop LAB Color: The Canyon Conundrum and Other Adventures in the Most Powerful Colorspace

Dan Margulis

Peachpit Press, 8/2005   ISBN: 0321356780

The LAB color model can be tricky to understand, but offers significant advantages over RGB or CMYK for many tasks. While this book is not primarily aimed for the novice, it provides many techniques to quickly and easily improve images in less time than in RGB or CMYK, as well as fix some problems that are impractical—if not impossible—to fix in RGB or CMYK.

Color, contrast, retouching, Shakespeare, selections, and a lot more are covered.

It may be too early to make this claim, but I believe this is as significant a book as Channel Chops was and is equally as likely to be overlooked among the thousands of Photoshop "recipe" books. It's not an easy read, but it covers material not available anywhere else.

I do recommend reading Dan's Professional Photoshop before this one, however. That book goes into more depth on some of the methods he uses in this book, as well as solving many other color issues. This might be best considered as the "second half" of that guide.

(Update: 3 years later, it's clear it was as significant, but it was not overlooked.)

Glitterguru on Photoshop: From Concept to Cool

Suzette Troche-Stapp

New Riders Publishing, 10/2004   *ISBN: 073571133X*

> *More on the business of high-end retouching, there's some excellent techniques discussed. She demonstrates a number of techniques that aren't widely discussed elsewhere.*

Commercial Photoshop Retouching: In the Studio

Glenn Honiball

O'Reilly, 8/2005.   *ISBN: 0-596-00849-X*

> *Primarily for, as the title says, commercial retouching. Glenn uses different techniques than either Katrin Eismann or Suzette Troche-Stapp, and shows how to get excellent results in a variety of circumstances.*

Digital Retouching for Fashion, Beauty, and Portrait Photography in Photoshop CS3
Digital Retouching for Fashion, Beauty, and Portrait Photography in Photoshop CS3

Gry Garness

eBook PDF 2008: http://www.grygarness.com/books/9780955830327.htm *($30)*

eBook PDF 2009: http://www.grygarness.com/books/9780955830341.htm *($38)*

> A very tailored guide to retouching for the topics described. Step-by-step instructions are provided, but there's a wealth of explanations for the underlying principles and foundations of retouching to achieve invisible results. **Highly recommended**.

Photoshop Channel CHOPS

David Biedny, Bert Monroy, Nathan Moody

New Riders Publishing, 1/1998   *ISBN: 1-56205-723-5*

> *It has been heralded as one of the most important volumes on Photoshop that must be included on a Photoshop professional's bookcase. Written for Photoshop v4 (no, not CS4; that's version 11), and long out-of-print, I still feel this book is the best guide to Photoshop Channels.*
> *If you want to understand the fundamental underpinnings of Photoshop, or want to learn how to create highly accurate selections without having to draw them, this is the book. Scott Kelby's more recent The Photoshop Channels Book isn't bad, but this is better—if you can get it at a reasonable price.*

Skin: The Complete Guide to Digitally Lighting, Photographing, and Retouching Faces and Bodies

Lee Varis

Sybex, 10/2006   *ISBN: ISBN-13: 978-0470047330*

> *This is a specialized book, in that it primarily discusses only photographing and retouching people. By doing so, however, it gave the author room to include things which are often neglected in other texts. I don't recommend it as a "first" or only Photoshop book, but it has enough material not covered elsewhere to make it quite worthwhile adding to a collection.*
> *There are also some sharpening techniques I've not run across elsewhere, as well as a procedure for fine-tuning Photoshop's Camera Raw converter for skintones.*

Adobe Photoshop CS2: The Art of Photographing Women

Kevin Ames

Wiley, 12/2006   *ISBN: 978-0470048252*

> As with Lee Varis' Skin, this is another specialized text, and one that focuses primarily on photographing and retouching people. Spending somewhat less time on the capture side, a little less on color correcting, and much more time on retouching than Skin, it's a well-balanced book for its topic, if the techniques are used in moderation. (Full-strength application will result in a very plastic, Barbie-like appearance.) Title says for CS2, but there's no real changes for CS3/CS4.

Layers: The Complete Guide to Photoshop's Most Powerful Feature

Matt Kloskowski

Peachpit Press, 2/2008   *ISBN: 0321534166*

> If you're comfortable with compositing using channels and color correction using adjustment layers, this book doesn't cover a lot of new ground. If you're used to doing standard retouching and correction, though, the techniques here will save you a lot of time and aggravation. Like channels, layers are another fundamental aspect of Photoshop, and understanding their strengths (and limitations!) will benefit anyone who does anything elaborate in Photoshop.