

# Establishing a Fine Art Workflow

## From Mindset to Print

“A great photograph is a full expression of what one feels about what is being photographed in the deepest sense, and is, a true expression of what one feels about life in its entirety.”

*Ansel Adams*

Photoshop is just plain intimidating. Period.

The most daunting part of editing is where to begin.

The place to start, like in all art, is in your head. Establishing a well thought out reason why you have the desire to take photography to a higher level is something we all must sort out.

Getting in deep, mentally, is to understand not only why but it will also point you in the directions of how, when, where and what your vision of the final results should at least feel like.

Photographic intent and the purpose for making photographs will give you insight in not only the subject your work should address but also the elemental and envious position of knowing where you should point your lens.

A Photographic Tradition from the onset of the medium has been to *homage* the masters. Get to know your photography and art history. Review work from the start of photography to the contemporary greats. Attend gallery and museum exhibitions to see actual prints. View prints with your nose almost on the glass.

In the timeline of photography, equipment has become increasingly advanced at lightning speed. With the introduction of digital, we as photographers now have the ability to make work on a level of excellence that once took decades of experience.

Fine Art photography - from capture to print - has been designed to be accessible, in comparison to analog. But it still is complex and consists of many methods, actions and specialized techniques that stand between us and a final print readied for exhibit.

To use Photoshop to its fullest potential, one must be patient, forgiving and organized. Understanding the back story and specs on software from the algorithms to coding and that it can be delivered right to our front doors is fascinating, but can be equally tedious and ultimately unnecessary to meet the final goal in making fine art.

The ultimate goal, where technology is concerned, is to understand how to take full control of its strengths, know when it could fail and understand how to avoid disasters then forget the rest. I find all this technology a real buzz kill. I'm an artist to visually express a valid state of emotion that I hope one day can deliver a mood that expedites the viewer to a state of wonder. The last thing I want to do is flip on the florescent lights of geeky knowledge that will totally slay my mood in making art.

One of the best tools in working on an image is to get into the proper mindset to evoke the visual magic and make sparks fly. This may be, for some, playing the right piece of music, drinking a particular beverage, running through a beloved poem or a line from a favorite author. Recalling the palpable magic of the actual place in the photograph before you can be the best boost.

One must bring everything you have to the table, not just the hyper-focus on the equipment and software alone. Think of all these techno-gadgets, from camera to printer, as catalysts to a higher plane of creativity. Ultimately, our collective goal, is to discover our best selves which will be reflected in our images.

Investment in your artistic self is the best investment one can make. And the first steps are to conquer the necessity of bending our brains in the ether of pixels and technology driven tools.

Just remember to keep your heart strings connected to your keyboard and know that every single individual with the genuine desire to learn and the unbridled passion for the art has the ability to become a prolific and skilled fine art photographer.