

» Introduction

Back in the old days, working in a chemical darkroom, I could only have dreamed of a post-processing tool as wonderful as Photoshop. But for me that's exactly what Photoshop is—a tool. It's a tool that helps me as a professional image creator. The image is what matters, not the tool.

The Photoshop Darkroom 2: Creative Digital Transformations looks at the features of Photoshop as practical aids in making great digital images. I don't focus on the latest and greatest Photoshop menus and palettes. For the most part, the Photoshop techniques shown in the book can be done using the core features of Photoshop. These features have generally been available going back many versions. Think of it this way: in a film darkroom the recipes for developer changed over time, but the underlying idea of how to develop film and paper stayed the same.

The goal of *The Photoshop Darkroom* series is to inspire *you* and provide *you* with techniques to try. A digital image starts with a capture or a scan and proceeds through post-processing towards its final state. How well your image comes out depends upon your mastery of the craft of digital post-processing and—far more important—your imagination. I'd like *The Photoshop Darkroom* books to be your guide and companion on this exciting journey.

A digital camera is a special purpose computer attached to a lens and a scanner. It makes sense to process imagery in the more powerful context of a desktop computer (and Photoshop) rather than in the camera.

It also is just common sense to make the best photos you can using your camera. Relying on Photoshop to fix sloppy photography is a waste of time and creative energy. Therefore I'll give you pointers about how to photograph with digital post-processing in mind—which is very different than being a lazy photographer.

The Photoshop Darkroom 2: Creative Digital Transformations follows *The Photoshop Darkroom*:

Creative Digital Post-Processing and can be read either as a sequel to the first volume or on its own. We've worked hard to make this volume self-contained—however, we didn't want to be overly repetitive of material that is amply covered in the first volume. Where appropriate I'll provide page references to the earlier *Photoshop Darkroom* book for more in-depth coverage of certain topics.

The emphasis in this volume is on creative transformations. This involves a wide range of image creation challenges from cleaning up an image that is “almost there”—and requires a little retouching—to creating entirely new fantastic digital images that are derived using compositing and other techniques.

As with the first *Photoshop Darkroom* book, I make no claims that the techniques I present are the only way, or even the best way, to do something. Photoshop is an incredibly rich and complex software environment with many moving parts and many ways to do anything. The most I can do is to show you the way I work in Photoshop on a daily basis as a professional photographer and image creator. If you can find a better or more fun way to accomplish the same tasks, more power to you—and please drop me a line to tell me your technique.

Once again, I am blessed with the perfect co-author, Phyllis Davis. Phyllis makes me complete in many ways. She is also a great antidote to my tendency to wave my hands about the details of a process—because she insists on complete clarity and wants every step to be explained carefully.

I love spending time behind the camera and I love spending time working on images in Photoshop. It's my hope that this book helps inspire you to work on your digital imagery in post-processing with as much joy as I do—enjoy!

Harold Davis



