

What is Creative Photography?

Presented by Roberta Edwards

Creative photography is difficult to define. It has no universally agreed description or precise dividing line that separates the genre from all others.



All photographers are creative to some extent, at least at the most basic level of "creating" pictures. A photographer decides to use a camera, points it at something of interest and releases the shutter. An image is taken and the photographer is an essential part of the creation process. However, the level of creativity involved is very small and the process does not fall within most descriptions of creative photography.

The background image started out as a photo of a tulip. A link to the YouTube video will be in the notes for this that are put up on the website.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J8T3_Ew0wqU

A Definition of Creative Photography

Creative photography is an extension of conventional photography into creative art.

Its purpose is to stimulate creative thoughts and encourage experimentation with new ideas going beyond a simple photograph

Creative photography is the altering of reality

Explanation and Guidelines:

It is an extension of conventional photography into creative art, and its purpose is to take the image beyond the literal through the use of imaginative skill or originality of thought.

There should be a significant photographic content, and inclusion of mixed media of any kind (*paint, transfer, digital etc*) is welcome. It can be a collage or a montage. **The final result must be all the photographer's own work.** This includes any tools used to alter the image that are not native to the software used, such as

- Extra brushes that add photographic elements such as snowflakes, raindrops, leaves etc
- Replacement pre-sets such as skies, sunsets, scenery
- Expansion packs

If you use image manipulation software you can

- Combine two images then experiment with different blending modes and opacity
- Experiment with the inbuilt tools such as colour replacement, invert, free transform, perspective warp, puppet warp, liquefy
- Create your own backgrounds or overlays by photographing interesting textures, skies, sunsets and scenery



If you are not using image manipulation software there are many other ways of being creative, such as

- Using in camera effects such as zoom pull, multiple exposures, intentional camera movement
- Cutting and pasting of printed images to make collages and montages
- Painting on prints or hand colouring

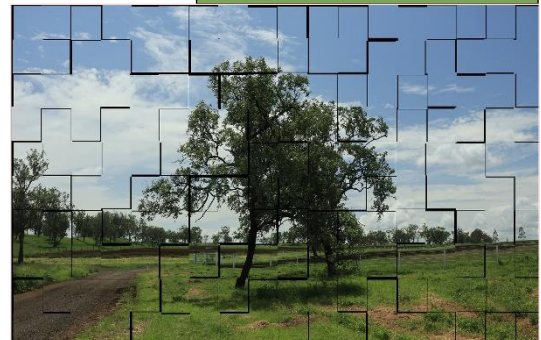
This image is a composite of a moon shot and some clouds. To swirl the clouds, I went 'Filter' 'Distort' 'Polar Coordinates...' 'Rectangular to Polar...' 'OK' Then added the moon into the centre of the swirl.

With a computer and photo manipulation software

Some ideas to get started

If you have a computer and photo manipulation software

- Combine two or more images, and then experiment with different blending modes and opacity. When first attempting this genre, it is best to start with very simple images
- Experiment with different filters in your software. Photoshop has over 45 filters in the standard Filter Gallery, along with variations of Blur, Render, Stylize, Pixelate, Distort etc. The new Neural Filters that come with the latest release of Photoshop include Super Zoom, Harmonisation, Depth Blur, Colourise, Colour Transfer among other.
- Photograph some interesting textures such as sandstone, tree bark, grass, clouds, anything that looks like it has a texture and blend them with other images.



For the top image, I divide the image into 12 sections using guide lines. Then using the square marquee tool, I cut out each section and placed it on a new layer. Once that was done, using the move tool, I rotated each layer alternating either clockwise or anti-clockwise a fraction to get the disjoined effect.

The bottom image was made using the 'Tiles...' tools under 'Filter' – 'Stylize' You can choose how many tiles and the offset percentage and even the background colour. And this tool can be used over and over to add tiles on tiles.

Without a computer and photo manipulation software

If you are not using a computer and photo manipulation software
There are many other ways of being creative, for example:

- Using in-camera effects such as slow shutter speeds, multiple exposures, ICM - moving the camera while exposing the image etc.
- Most digital cameras have a double exposure function, you just have to look through your instruction manuals and the camera menus.
- Zoom pull is setting the camera to a longer exposure than normal, focusing on a point with the lens zoomed either all the way in or all the way out, then while the shutter is open shifting the zoom the other extreme.



The top image here was taken looking towards the Wheel of Brisbane while standing on the Victoria Bridge with the camera on a tripod and the shutter set at 4 seconds.



The bottom image was taken at the Queens Park Christmas lights on a tripod with a 5.2 second shutter, during which I zoomed in and then out again.

I have even tried hand held zoom pull while turning the camera

Creativity in Camera

- Watersplash with Strawberry
- Colours in Bubbles
- Capturing Smoke
- Rear Curtain Flash



My first attempt at dropping a strawberry into a large jar of water to photograph the splash and the fruit. It only took about 35 photos to get one that I liked. Timing is the key.



Using a polarising filter, I photographed a bubble with my flash sitting above the bubble. I really need a large soft box for the flash so the flash itself is not visible in the reflection on the bubble.... Maybe next time, this was only my first attempt.

Capturing smoke from an incense stick can be quite tricky, depending on what air currents are around at the time. With no air movement, you will get a single vertical flow of smoke, so you need some gentle air



movement, but not very much, to get the smoke swirling around. I was able to get several good smoke formations which I plan to use at a later time.

All these images were created using ISO 100, F16-22, and shutter speed of 1/100 – 1/200 the sync speed of my flash, in a poorly lit room.

The rear curtain flash image was created many years ago after seeing a video on YouTube.....

There are many more ways to do creativity in camera.



How to obtain assistance with Creative Photography

- Look at the work of other creative photographers
- For those interested in digital manipulation there are a wide variety of books on the market. Look in your local bookshops and libraries.
- Digital photography magazines.
- Talk to other TPS members or if you are in other groups, talk to the members of those groups.
- YouTube is a great resource for learning lots of different techniques.



I created the top image here by following a YouTube video by Spoon Graphics.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3JxCbwn-6bQ>

The bottom image was created while following a video by Adam Williams of Adam Williams Creative on YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LDxcfgQU0Cc&t=12s>



Charli Savage

- Conceptual Fine Art Photographer
- Based in Sydney and on The Gold Coast
- Conducts Workshops for Select Groups
- <https://www.youtube.com/c/CharliSavage/videos>

Charli describes herself as

An adventurous soul with a wild imagination... bit of a weirdo... shameless daydreamer.

Deep down, she has always felt like she belonged nowhere and everywhere at the same time, never truly being grounded.



About Charli's photography

She is completely self-taught and credits that with having the freedom to be boundless in the way she creates. With no rules to follow, the possibilities are endless. She uses only a few basic tools to create her images. She shoots in natural light, and gets all the photos she wants in the one outing so she doesn't have to worry about the lighting.

Charli's mission

Is to create visual stories and ignite your curiosity and encourage you to take your own leap into the unknown, where the possibilities are endless and the magic awaits.

Colin Smith

- Creator of Photoshop Café – The Ultimate Photoshop Resource
- Born in Glasgow, grew up in New Zealand, moved to Los Angeles in search of his purpose
- Worked as an Art Director for a magazine
- <https://photoshopcafe.com/>



Colin Smith is a Los Angeles based digital artist, photographer and trainer. He is founder of one of the world's most popular websites for creators, [PhotoshopCAFE.com](https://photoshopcafe.com/). Which has received over 40,000,000 visitors.

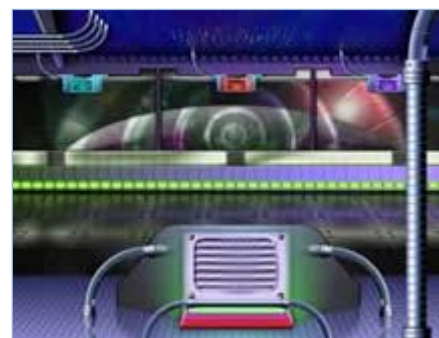
In the 90s Colin began to really get into Photoshop and began experimenting with Photorealistic illustration.

Two things triggered this desire, the first was constantly retouching really bad photos for the magazine where he was an Art Director and it got to the point where he was recreating such a large portion of the photo, that he wondered what would happen if I just started without the photo.

The second inspiration came from Star Wars. Colin found out that Photoshop was used in these movies. He challenged himself to create an image so believable that it would look like a photograph.

Alien Station was his first attempt at this imagery without the use of references or photos. Not exactly a masterpiece, but he was happy with how it turned out. He continued creating what he called "Digital Still life" by using real objects as references.

It wasn't long before he wanted to start his own site where I could share tips and tutorials freely with the community. This was when Photoshop CAFÉ was born.



Around 2000 he had enough confidence to try to create the image of his Camera. He entered it in the International Photoshop World Guru awards just for kicks. He didn't expect much from this but was stunned when I received an email stating that I was chosen as one of 3 finalists for the award.

He went to the Los Angeles Convention Centre in 2001 where the winner was announced at a ceremony at Photoshop World. To his stunned amazement, his image won first place! No one was more surprised than him!



UPDATE 2020

Colin has been focusing on YouTube with over 200,000 subscribers and 20 million views on the [Photoshop CAFÉ YouTube channel](#). As a leading trainer, Colin has written 20 books, and too many video courses to count. He is a regular speaker at major conferences, including Adobe Max, PPE, WPPI, Photoshop World, Creative Pro and Imaging USA.

Joshua Dunlop

- One happy client
- Blogs & Helpful Hints
- Frustrated with lack of quality resources
- Created '[Expert Photography.com](#)' in 2011

Quote from ExpertPhotography.com:

It was a rush like no other.

A happy client, my first photography paycheque, and a room full of people admiring my work.

The date was January 17th 2011, and I had just finished my first photography job.

That was all it took for me to realise that I wanted to pursue photography full time. So I took a risk. I quit my job working in live audio (my dream for many years), and started my very own (this) website. It took a little help from my brother and co-founder, Michael Dunlop, and my Dad ([Sales Turnaround Expert, Barry Dunlop](#)).

My plan was to write a few blog posts, help some photographers, and get some recognition. Then maybe I'd book more photography jobs.

...but things got a little out of hand.

As I was researching content to write about, I was increasingly frustrated with the quality of photography education on the internet.

Thin content, distracting ads, and minimal photos. I knew I could do a better job than what was currently available, so that's what I did...



In April 2011 I founded ExpertPhotography with the help of my brother Michael Dunlop.

And since then (a lot of credit goes to the work done in 2018), ExpertPhotography has grown into the world's largest photography education website in the world.

Which is why ExpertPhotography is now run by a team of 13 people (and 50 freelance writers), producing 18 free blog posts a week, with a variety of online courses, ebooks, cheat sheets, presets, and more.

The website you're currently browsing took almost a year to design and build, and is the 5th design we've used since we founded (sorry if you don't recognise us haha). Everything we do here is to make the process of learning photography easier, so you can experience the same joy we do.

Photography has changed our lives, and I hope we can help it to change yours too.



Some YouTube Resources

[Adobe Creative Cloud](#)

[Erik Johansson](#)

[PiXimperfect](#)

[Adam Williams Creative](#)

[Suellen Saidee Cook](#)

[Gavin Hoey](#)

[Photoshop Café](#)

[Serge Ramelli Photography](#)

[Brook Shaden](#)

[Kelvin Designs](#)

[Eric Paré / Xangle](#)

[Paul Trani](#)

[Expert Photography](#)

[Spoon Graphics](#)

There are so many more, just search for what you are interested in learning.

Other TPS members can also mentor you, all you have to do is ask 😊