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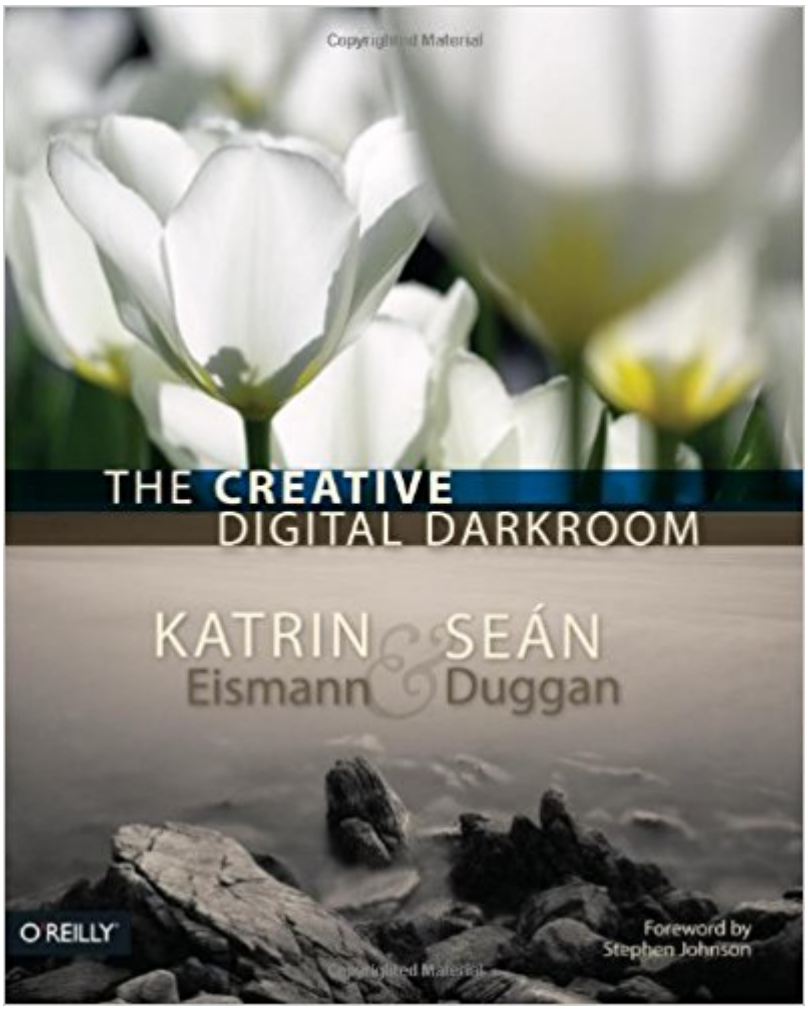
The Creative Digital Darkroom



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Synopsis

This tutorial takes photographers beyond the quick tips and gimmicky effects of many digital photography books. Author Katrin Eismann -- an internationally acclaimed artist, bestselling author, and gifted educator -- offers high-profile work, including her own, as examples for teaching photographers how to use the digital medium to create, edit, and output images that reflect their true vision.Co-authored by photographer and teacher Sean Duggan, The Creative Digital Darkroom translates skills, concepts, and nomenclature of the traditional darkroom into digital solutions for photographers who sense that, despite the newness of the technologies at hand, there remains a timeless method for learning and practicing photography the right way. This is not a Photoshop book per se, but it does focus on the photographic aspects of Photoshop, something other books claim to do but rarely have the discipline to accomplish. The Creative Digital Darkroom includes:Four sections that cover the black & white darkroom, the color darkroom, creative techniques, and production essentialsChapters that begin with a thorough foundation followed by numerous tutorial examples that apply the theory to real-world examplesExamples and a layout that enables readers to find, understand, and apply the featured techniques quickly and easilyThe authors are both renowned photographers and Photoshop expertsClearly, The Creative Digital Darkroom is not your typical digital photography "how to" book. It’s ideal for intermediate and advanced photographers, artists, and educators looking for clear, concise, insightful, and inspiring information and techniques on how to make their photographs shine. The language, and techniques will immediately appeal to serious students and professionals, and the original tutorial images and high-profile work will make the book an important visual resource for educators and art appreciators.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Katrin Eismann is world-known for her talent as a Photoshop expert and photographer, but above all she’s considered one of the best teachers her field has ever seen. This book uses the clear, concise tutorial approach that made her two previous Photoshop books bestsellers that take photographers beyond quick tips and gimmicky effects.Sean Duggan is a fine art photographer, educator, and Adobe Certified Photoshop Expert with extensive experience in both the traditional and digital darkroom. Co-author of Real World Digital Photography and Photoshop Artistry, he’s been helping photographers master Photoshop and digital darkroom techniques through his workshops for over ten years. He brings his keen understanding of the photographic process and creating the best image possible to The Creative Digital Darkroom.

This book is written for the photographer, the visual artist, or anyone aspiring to become such. In the first paragraph of the preface the authors state "As visual artists, photographers are constantly practicing looking and seeing images. They make photographs, even when they don’t have a camera with them. The eye is the lens and the mind is the camera." The digital darkroom tools that the authors reference in the book are Adobe Photoshop CS3 and Adobe Photoshop Lightroom. They further state that the concepts and techniques presented are really applicable for use in most image editing and RAW processing applications. The companion web site, [...], provides additional information, as well as the images for use while following along with the exercises in the book and a bonus chapter in PDFformat covering the subject of creating high quality prints.Today many books on the subjects of image editing and RAW processing are mainly step-by-step cookbooks, with an emphasis on following a recipe to create a specific result. While this book does have plenty of exercises to step you through, the focus is really to hone your sense of creativity, refine your artist’s eye, and build a deep understanding of how the digital darkroom tools work. The first of 10 chapters is brief, only 15 pages, and addresses training yourself to "see" images and learn digital darkroom basics for both detail work on individual images and batch processing for large numbers of files. From here you begin to lay the groundwork for image processing with considerations for building a digital darkroom environment and understanding color settings and management. Next, in the chapter titled Scan, Develop, and Organize, are details on various methods and considerations for

acquiring and managing images. And now the magic begins, as do the in-depth explanations of the processes used to create those magical results.Chapter 5, Tone and Contrast, caught my attention as my photo-taking abilities require a lot of darkroom work especially on those two subjects. I also like to add drama, or some would say melodrama, to areas of my image. The `deep learning' contained in these pages provided me with a lot of much needed information. Working with curves and the Photoshop curves dialog has always been a matter of applying a known formula and not knowing where to go from there, but usually another tool. The section titled Understanding Curves begins on page 140 and continues through page 145. This tool provides the greatest control over manipulating tonal values in an image. How to select a tone in an image and then locate it on the curve grid and then create a control point, enabling a tonal adjustment, is thoroughly explained. Then there are steps, explanations and examples for applying a basic S-curve and reverse S-curve for increasing or decreasing contrast. The concept of lockdown points was new to me. It is a method of placing points at grid intersections, fixing parts of the curve in place so they are not affected as you adjust other areas of the curve. After this introduction to the power of curves for use in tonal control of an image, I read on to see that the tool plays a prominent role elsewhere in the chapters when working with color. I was able to use the info gleaned from these pages for improving a portrait cropped from a family picture. Using the approach of applying a mask and subtle curves adjustments, I was able to reduce the ruddy complexion in the photo to a more natural state for this individual.The Short Take:The ten chapters of this book contain a lot of technical expertise, sometimes more information than I could absorb in just one sitting. The subjects discussed cover a wider range than I could detail here. I'll mention just a sampling of subjects: color management, techniques for acquiring images, improving image quality, and applying creative enhancements. I found this book to be a great resource filled with tips and cautions, suggestions for training the eye to see in terms of composition, step-by-step instructions for trying out digital darkroom techniques, and bits of personal wisdom from the authors. I'm sure it will prove a valuable resource to keep handy by my computer when transforming a digital photo or my imagination into a digital creation.

We all know that film photography will likely be around to some degree forever and ever, but we also know that just as snapshot processing kiosks have disappeared from parking lots, the general public's dedication to film cameras is already dead. Computerized post-processing is now squarely in the hands of John Q., and ever-increasing numbers of people are learning how to take and produce better photographs. In addition, really excellent and complex cameras are finding their way into the hands of more and more people."The Creative Digital Darkroom" is for people who are

interested in making their photos better than the ones in Uncle George's cell phone. It's thorough, solid, informative, and serious in its approach to photographic post-processing. Yes, it's Photoshop and Lightroom specific, but let's face it: despite the many good digital dark-room programs available, Adobe's are the flagship standard.In my photo club, there are still the hold-outs who think that "photo-shopping" is cheating ... that the best photograph is the one that is perfect right out of the camera. While there's more than an element of truth in that, it's also true that what all of us shutterbugs are ultimately after is a compelling image. It's also true that plenty of chemical manipulation goes on under red lights and closed doors. This book does a wonderful job of explaining what Adobe software tools do and teaching how/why to use them. Anyone wanting to learn how to effectively approach digital photoprocessing professionally(there's a nice section on scanning film pictures or old family photos into Photoshop, too,) from workflow and choosing storage systems to the creative manipulation of photographic elements, will find this book a great place to start.

With one notable exception, this book is a rock solid foundation on the digital darkroom. It's very well written and the authors explain things in a very understandable way. It's full of information that every serious digital photographer should learn and master. Lots of this information can be gleaned from other sources, but this book rounds up all the really important info into one place. I can see this book being used as a text in digital photography classes. Although there is a section on creative enhancements, this is not the book for you if you're looking to learn to remove your ex from a photo, or create photo art. But, if you're looking to make your photos look great and understand how and why, this is your book.The one flaw is the lack of information on printing. Sure, the authors have a website where you can download the "bonus" printing chapter, but why was this chapter not included in the book? Printing is as important as any other subject in this book, so to claim the printing chapter is a "bonus" is a great disservice to buyers of this otherwise great book. I find it disturbing that the publisher is trying to pass off a flaw as a "bonus".I would have given this book 5 stars if not for the omission of the printing chapter. Otherwise, this is a valuable resource for your digital darkroom.

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