Creative Flower Photography Notes

Colin Harrison FRPS EFIAP/d3 MFIAP MPAGB APAGB FBPE MPSA GPSA FIPF AWPF

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Supporting cancer charities at home and abroad

The Talk

* Always interested in flower photography in a landscape or as a close-up.

* Many of the images of flowers were taken in our garden and then parts of the flowers were removed to be photographed or frozen.

* Inspiration Pierre Joseph Redoute' – images on greeting cards **Info**

* What is fine art photography.

* Garden studio – get comfortable!

* Close ups using Sigma 105mm f2.8 close-up lens. **Info**

* Depth of field using f16 and f2.8

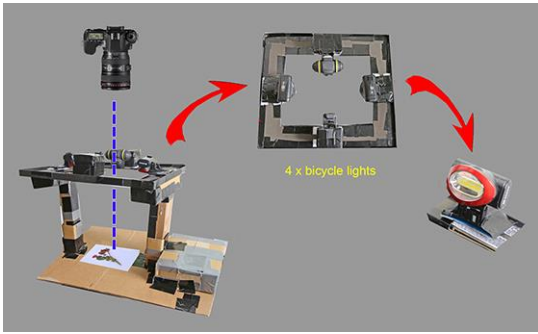***** Converted IKEA homemade copy stand – add black or white backdrop.

NB
Use torch/
bicycle light
on velcro

Similar available at IKEA USA – Lack table 22"x 22"

Paper / Carboard backdrops from Hobby Lobby, Michaels etc

* Images taken in shade.

* Using a torch **Info** online half price (many to choose from)

 * Water spray added (old detergent spray).

* Flower pressing – place flower between card/material and put in press.

Method one - in microwave **Info** Having secured the top of the press and placed in microwave –

FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS AND ONLY LEAVE FOR A VERY SHORT TIME

Method two - cold press **Info** Secure bolts and wing nuts and leave overnight.

 Make your own? Use a heavy book.

* Most flower images within the size 6 x 4 inches – which means the camera does not have to be moved when taking a number of images

* Original pressed images photographed using homemade cardboard stand and 4 cheap bicycle lights – Acceptable white balance.

Make your own camera support ie tripod head fixed to a box instead of using a tripod

*Life in the freezer - flower not completely in water and held in position using Blu Tack. **Info**

*When photographing melt with hot water and small areas with warm finger.

Re freeze melted flower and start again.

*Montage images into the landscape or buildings.

*Seen better days - photograph old flowers.

*Close-ups of water droplets – spray or natural rain – use a Rain Repellent spray **Info** to decrease size of water droplets. Duotone > Mode mono > Duotone blue and white.

*Putting a frame around images using On1 effects software **Info** or duplicating an image and stepping its size eg 90%, 80% etc on transparent layers.

*Still life - combining photographs of vases etc and pressed flowers in Photos

Still life in a box – under expose settings eg 4 stops darker, then use flashlight.

Put still life image into Topaz etc.

*Close-ups of insects on flowers using large flash gun – hahnel MODUS 600 RT **Info** (very fast recycling) and homemade flash reflector

Using Sigma 105mm f2.8 Macro EX DG OS HSM **Info**

– see below

*Macro photography using Canon MP-E 65mm f2.8 1-5 x macro lens **Info**

hahnel MODUS 360 RT flash gun **Info** and	**Settings used**
homemade reflector – see below	1 / 250 sec (or maximum camera flash synchronisation)
To produce creative insect/flower images.	F16 400 ASA Flash ETTL Auto

Home made flash reflector

hahnel MODUS 360RT
flash gun

Canon MP-E 65mm f/2.8
1-5x macro Lens

END OF PART ONE

PART TWO

* Also using lesser known software

All images imported as jpg.s. Some software can import PSD.s

Some software can work as stand alone ie not accessed via Photoshop – just drag and drop image into software.

*Adobe Photoshop Info

(Options: PaintShop Pro **Info**   Adobe Elements **Info**   Affinity **Info**   Lightroom **Info**)
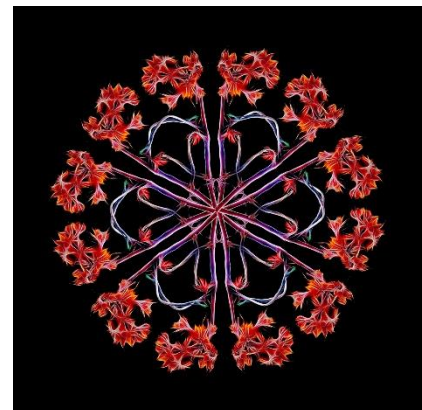
a)   Layers and blending modes – What is a texture? – eg image of rust, old faded wallpaper, old paving slab etc. Overlay on flower – trial and error.

d)   Like a kaleidoscope - rotating and duplicating an item – start with a **blank square** and rotate item around the centre of the square using settings eg rotate 30, 45 or 60 degrees on each **transparent layer**. On completion of the circle merge visible and duplicate this new layer which should still be transparent. Now reduce size to suite eg 80% and keep on doing this on new layers.

Black or white backgrounds?

e)   Any one for a twirl – follow these steps

   1 Image

   2 In Photoshop: Filter > Pixelate > **Mezzotint**

   Settings: Amount 100, Zoom, Best

   3 **Twirl** +125 on 2 above

   4 Duplicate layer and flip horizontally

   5 **Blend Mode - Multiply**

Change size and colour etc. Step down image size and/or blend with flower.

*Flaming Pear – Flood software Info   FREE - see page 5

Water reflection

*Redfield Fractalius Info

Hair line distortion. Can be white or black hairs and different sizes.

*JixiPix Spektrel Art Info

Similar to Fractalius

*Nik collection HDR Efex Pro Info

High Dynamic Range software

*Topaz - Studio 2 software Info

a   to produce moody and atmospheric images

b   Also use AI Clear (Artificial Intelligence). Using default settings to remove noise, enhance sharpness etc – very quick. NB. Not mentioned in talk

*And now for something completely different

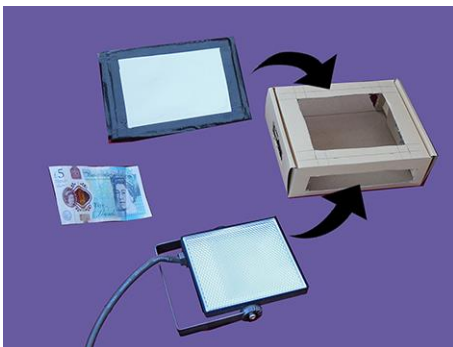 A selection of creative montaged images including an elephant.

*Trees

Tree looking part of a flower eg Ornamental cabbage put into a landscape looking image.

*Copying pressed flowers - method two

Using small and flat 10w Duracell LED floodlight   Col temp 5000k. Runs off mains. 20w also available

Please note other versions of this light may have to be connected to the mains.

Also used flashlight as fill in lighting

* A "softly softly approach" using Gaussian Blur and Noise

Works well on close ups

Approx. Settings:

Gaussian Blur 100 – you will lose all detail on image

Mono Noise   20   Lower opacity   40

END OF PART TWO

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*FAQ

1. Do I use a Lensbaby creative lens? **Info**

2. Do I photo stack? **Info** No but plan to Info

3. Do I use YouTube? Yes – fantastic for endless ideas

4. At the beginning of your talk you showed a picture of a forget me not flower. How did it get its name?

There was once a medieval knight who was walking beside the river one night with his lady love. He was holding a bouquet in his hands that he probably wanted to gift to the lady. However, because his armour was too heavy, the knight fell into the river. As he was falling, he threw the flower bouquet at his lover, and he shouted, "Forget-me-not!"

NOTES UPDATES

1   Use SKY REPLACEMENT IN PHOTOSHOP CC (Also see in Affinity and Elements)

Edit > Sky Replacement

https://youtu.be/cdjsUlOxvrU

2   Luminar 4 does the same **Info**

3   FREE OFFICIAL COPY OF ORIGINAL FLOOD SOFTWARE Info   Scroll down on their web page

4 Using a 200mm close up lens can produce a shallower depth of field. Used further away

from the subject.

5 Use extension tubes. **Info**

6 Use close-up filters. **Info**

7 Recommended books and authors - also look on Google and YouTube

a. Digital Flower Photography **SUE BISHOP** -   Published by photographers pip institute press

b. Fine Art Flower Photography -

Creative Techniques and the art of press Observation   **TONY SWEET** Published Stackpole Books

8 All images in talk produced using JPGs – for best results use RAW!

9 Distinctions: **RPS   PAGB   PSA   FIAP   BPE   AWPF**

10 **Making snow in Photoshop**

1) Create black layer over image

2) Add noise 150

3) Filter> Blur> Blur more

4) Levels (from left). 160. 1.0. 200

5) Layers mode > Screen

6) Filter>Pixelate>Crystalize (between 2 and 10 depending on image size)

7) Filter> Blur>Motion Blur. Angle - 60 Distance 16

8) Saved as a PSD you can use this layer it on any image

9) Duplicate this layer and enlarge to give bigger snow

10) Also lower opacity on snow layers if necessary

11 **Making a sphere** in Photoshop

Filter > Distort > Spherize – repeat a few times

Adjust shape, Edit > Transfer > Warp

Place in circle to shape

12 **Using polar coordinates** in Photoshop

Flter > Distort > Polarcoordinates

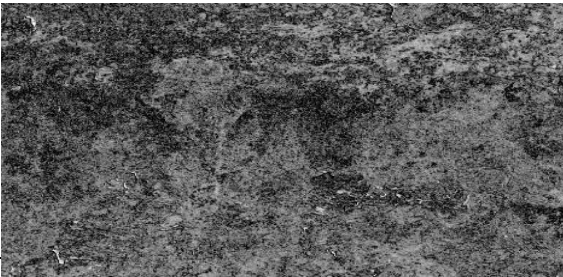13 **What is a texture/grunge overlay and how do I apply it?**

Using layers, texture overlays blend into the original subject by lowering its opacity or using blending modes. For competitions use home made textures only.

A   Original rust/grunge image

B   Blurred image

C   Mono and find edges

D   Material

14 **Making a Cyanotype**

  A In Photoshop

      a   Create a light blue background layer and make a white border using Photoshop

      or ON1 Effects.

      b   Cut out original colour flower image and put on on transparent layer

      c   Convert to mono> Blending mode> Screen> 60% opacity

  B In Nik Software

      Color Efex Pro 4> Colorise> 05 - Cyanotype

  C In On1 Effects

      Filters> Black and White> Cyanotype

Briefly, the original Cyanotype process treated a material with what are now fairly dangerous chemicals. A flower, for example, was placed on the material, and a piece of glass placed on top.

This was then exposed to daylight for a lengthy time and then the chemicals washed off

Modern day Cyanotype kits are available on Amazon - I have not tested this process **Info**

15 **Talk -** Produced in Windows 10 > Slide Show

16 **Flatbed scanner** - use to copy pressed flowers

17 **Corel Paint Shop Pro** **ON OFFER ?** **Info**

18 **PEBEO Prisme Fantasy** paints to produce image backdrops and overlays **Info**

Disclaimer

The information provided is for general informational purposes only. All information is provided in good faith and however I make no representation of any kind regarding its accuracy.

 Contact

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me via my website **www.colinharrisonphotography.uk**

If you enjoyed this talk I am taking bookings for my New Digital Adventure talk showing many of my award winning national/international images from 1995 -2020

Many thanks to the generosity all the camera clubs and organisations in the UK and abroad for supporting cancer charities in their countries.

Take care and keep safe

Colin

Colin Harrison

30 June 2021