

Gimp

MAGAZINE



Aaron
TYREE-PHOTOGRAPHER

ISSN: 1929-6894

DIGITAL VERSION



BY

SA

NEXT GEN GIMP
MAGAZINE

AARON TYREE
INTERVIEW

AARON TYREE
MASTER CLASS

THE GIMP
GALLERY



Aaron

TYREE-PHOTOGRAPHER

NEXT GEN GIMP
MAGAZINE

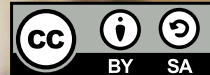
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Welcome to the new and improved GIMP Magazine! The team has had some valued time off over the summer, but we have also been working hard to make our magazine better. We have had some challenges but we also have a vision and a clear direction set for this magazine based directly on your feedback.

As the managing editor I have had some time to think about the future of GIMP Magazine. Some of the challenges we have had have been around production. We have a very small team to produce this magazine four times per year. The amount of work to edit and creatively lay out a 100 page magazine for both print and digital has been a significant effort. We conducted a short survey some time ago, and the vast majority of our readers felt that digital was all they needed. This is important information for our team, and I have decided to discontinue the print version. While I loved the quality and feel of the hard copy magazine, this move will save us considerable time and allow for a greater range of submissions from our readers. This format change will also allow us to re-design the magazine entirely around the screen viewing experience, not print. This new 16:9 layout gives us an array of new creative possibilities for presenting articles and it looks great on widescreen monitors, tablets, and phones. I view this more as a slide presentation as opposed to a printed document, even though this will print on 8.5"x14" legal size paper.

My vision has always been to eventually grow to a monthly magazine. In an effort to get closer to that vision I have decided to try a pilot project. This means that we will be producing a monthly magazine for six months or so starting with this issue. Ideally I would like to get to ten issues per year. Each issue will be considerably smaller, consisting of one feature article, a related tutorial, and perhaps tips, along with creative gallery submissions.

This new format will be much easier for our small team to produce, and it will provide more opportunities for our GIMP artists and photographers to be featured on the cover of our magazine. We would like to grow our team, and as we do so, grow the content within our magazine. Perhaps someday we might grow to a 100 page magazine every month. We are presently looking for an editor and illustrator to join our team. Simply contact us if you are interested (<http://gimpmagazine.org/contact>).

During this time off, I have kept close to free software as I created an educational book along with a full video series on the subject of calligraphy and lettering (a re-emerging fine art). I have learned a great deal from this ebook/video project, and I feel that it is important to use these open source tools regularly while working for this magazine. I had huge success using these tools (GIMP, Inkscape, and Scribus) and I also plan on writing about my experience so that others can also feel comfortable using open source

software on large creative projects.

We were hoping to have a GIMP 2.10 Special Edition of the magazine ready to go, but unfortunately this has not happened. The core GIMP team has reached out to us in an effort to improve communications, and we look forward to working with them in the future. The GIMP magazine team would still love to do a special feature on GIMP 2.10 to share with the world all of the amazing new features that will be available. From what limited material I have seen so far, version 2.10 looks outstanding!

GIMP Magazine will continue to be absolutely free for everyone to enjoy. And we do appreciate your donations as they help to pay for our operating costs such as web hosting, cloud storage, and so forth. As we move to a monthly magazine we have also made efforts to accept more regular donations by using the popular Patreon system where you can help with the ongoing support of GIMP Magazine.

The team at GIMP Magazine proudly presents Issue #6. If you are not already doing so, please follow us on Twitter, Google+, Issue, or by email subscription. Also, tell a friend about GIMP and GIMP Magazine and kindly tweet or blog about us to help spread the word.

Enjoy!



Cheers
Steve

<http://twitter.com/steveczajka>
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Design & Desktop Publishing

Dave Lepek, Contributing Writer / Editing Assistance

Rolf Steinort, All things Web

Debi Dalio, Contributing Writer / Editing / Submissions

Ian Muttou, Contributing Writer / Photography

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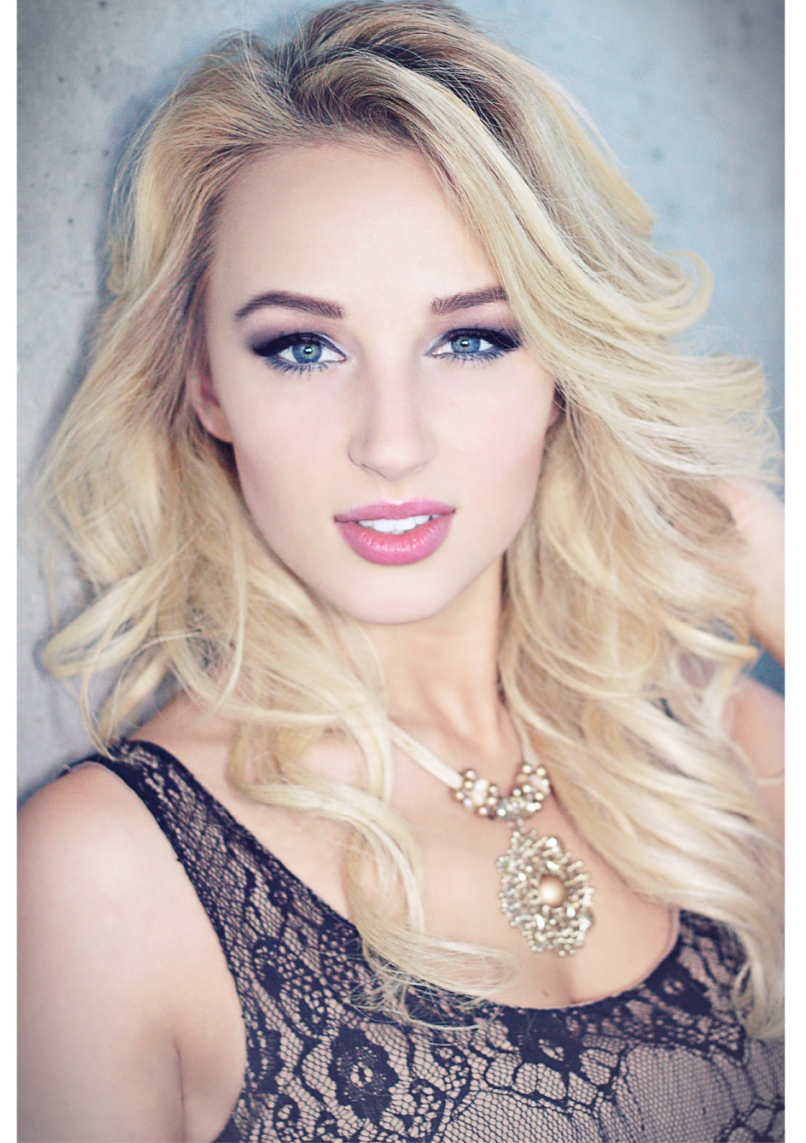


Aaron

TYREE-PHOTOGRAPHER



Aaron
TYREE-PHOTOGRAPHER





AN INTERVIEW WITH AARON TYREE

Edited by Debi Dalio

Aaron Tyree is a commercial fashion and portrait photographer from Washington State in the U.S. He uses a variety of open source software and innovative low-cost hardware in his work. He is most well known for his images of Devon Jade which were shot using an older Canon 20D with DIY reflectors and were post-processed in GIMP.

Aaron
TYREE-PHOTOGRAPHER



SO, AARON, HOW DO YOU GET THE IDEAS FOR YOUR WORK?

It really depends on what or who I am shooting. Also, for whom I am shooting. A lot of it is intuitive. With people, I'll just listen and pay attention to little things. When I feel that "click" of seeing who they are, and how they want to be seen, I try to encourage that and capture it. Trust and friendship produce the best images in my opinion. If it's for a commercial client, it's kind of the same thing, but I listen for what their vision is. Once I see it, I throw ideas and impressions out as I go until I get there. It's a fun process.

WHO OR WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST INFLUENCES FOR YOU?

People and relationships. Those are the big ones. And just stopping to actually look around and be thankful for it. I think when you believe that everything is created and that intention and love underlie everything around you, it changes how you see most things. A camera is really just a copy machine. The art occurs in the intention and framing of how things are seen by the person using it.

As far as photographers go, I'd say Zach Arias is a big influence for how he approaches photography, and even life in general. I also like Sue Bryce for her use of light and how she captures emotional connection. Artistically, I am really inspired by Camilla Åkrans. Her composition and color tones are unique. Another inspiration is Chase Jarvis for his total commitment to doing what he does well, and his continual drive to innovate.

**ART OCCURS IN THE INTENTION
AND FRAMING OF HOW THINGS
ARE SEEN BY THE PERSON
USING THE CAMERA**

Aaron
TYREE-PHOTOGRAPHER



HAVE YOU EVER TAKEN FORMAL LESSONS OR ARE YOU SELF- TAUGHT?

If formal means sitting in a classroom with an instructor, no I've never taken formal lessons.

But I have spent a ridiculous number of hours watching CreativeLIVE workshops. I can't say enough about what they are doing there. I've been able to learn from the best people in the world because of these workshops. I practice a lot. I grew up in a very musical family where practice was normal, so daily practice of whatever I am doing is pretty ingrained in how I live. With photography, I'll do mental exercises even when I'm not shooting, like, "If I had to take one photograph within a 50-foot radius of where I'm sitting, what would it be, and how would I do it." Or, "What is one character trait of the person I'm talking to that I think is beautiful, and how would I photograph it." It may sound over the top to some, but having spent some years doing things that I didn't love, getting to do something that I do love is a great privilege, and I believe it's worth investing all of yourself to be the best you can be. Gratitude is powerful.

WHAT IS YOUR PROCESS FOR CREATING AN IMAGE?

Understanding what you want to say is always the starting point. Even if it's just an emotion. If you don't have that, you are going to have a hard time saying anything that will capture anyone's attention. Honestly, I think the best images ask simple questions. "This person is beautiful. Do you agree?" or "Do you see the integrity this person has?" Things like that. Good photographs give the viewer an opportunity to form their own conclusions.

Understanding the light and color that you want is second. When I'm outside, I'll always start with light. I'll find a space where the light is doing what I want it to do. Then I'll look for composition. I like simplicity and negative space, so I look for that, or interesting geometry that frames the subject in unexpected ways. Once I have all the technical stuff out of the way, I'll just focus on an emotional connection with the person I'm shooting. In the studio, the process is faster since it's a controlled space. I can set everything up beforehand. I use a lot of reflection and

continuous light in the studio to minimize anything that could draw my attention away from the person I am shooting.

After that, it's a matter of brewing some coffee, turning on SomaFM, and setting up an editing environment.

GOOD PHOTOGRAPHS GIVE THE VIEWER AN OPPORTUNITY TO FORM THEIR OWN CONCLUSIONS.

WHAT IS YOUR MOST MEMORABLE SHOOT?

There was a shoot that I did with my stepdaughter Devon in the backyard one day while we were barbecuing as a family. The reason it was so significant is partly because of the events leading up to it. Only three months before, I had made an internal decision to seriously pursue photography after hearing a radio interview. The interview was about shots seen around the world, and had several well-known photographers describing the amazing moments when their images were captured. I had the thought as I was listening that something divine was happening when those shots were taken, like they were being given a gift. Then, as strange as it might sound, I just had this conviction that if the gift that they were getting was not coming from them, then I could receive the same gift. It's a simple thought, but it was just one of those moments where you feel like the air is full of electricity and you are peeking into something beyond yourself.

For the next three months I consumed everything I could find about photography. I watched hours and hours of workshops, took notes, and then refined the notes. I did not have a camera at that point, so what I was doing would probably seem pretty silly to some. A photographer without a camera. But my wife had the same sense I did and supported me. I was cultivating a deep vision for what I wanted to say with a



Aaron
TYREE-PHOTOGRAPHER

TOOLS IN TYREE'S WORKFLOW

CAMERAS AND EQUIPMENT:

- AN ASSORTMENT OF CANON CAMERAS WITH MODIFIED MAGIC LANTERN FIRMWARE
- 3500 WATTS OF 5500K CFL LIGHTING AND A VARIETY OF MODIFIERS
- 4 LED MINI-PANELS
- 2 CREE HIGH INTENSITY LED SPOTS
- 1 DIY 600 RGB LED PANEL WITH REMOTE
- 1 MULTI-CHANNEL REMOTE SHUTTER RELEASE
- NEXUS 7 WITH DSLR REMOTE

SOFTWARE:

- DEBIAN GNU/LINUX
- IMAGEMAGICK
- UFRAW-BATCH
- AFTERSHOT PRO
- GIMP
- DROPBOX
- OWNCLOUD

camera when I did eventually get one. After three months I got to a point where I thought, "OK. I can't go much further without a camera." And I couldn't really afford one at that point. I went into my room, sent up a prayer, and then went outside to greet a friend that had come to visit. Long story short, she had brought a camera with her that she felt like she was supposed to give me. I was pretty silent and emotional for a long time after that.

So, when I shot with Devon in the backyard, it was a pretty amazing feeling. I made some reflectors from a silver emergency blanket and used a \$5 roll-down vinyl blind that I had gotten from a thrift store as a background. Devon is a beautiful girl. And I kept getting goosebumps as I was shooting her. It's hard to explain. I felt like the images I was seeing in the viewfinder were significant somehow. When I tentatively posted those images online a little while later, the response was beyond anything that either one of us could have expected.. Four months later, those images had been viewed over a million times, and we were both being contacted by magazines and designers.

It has taken about a year of very hard work, sacrifice, and some sleepless nights to start seeing those contacts become clients, but I firmly believe those first days were a divine gift. It keeps you humble when what you are doing was given as a gift in the first place.

Before getting into photography full time, I did some Linux development. When I built my workflow, I wanted to incorporate what I had learned. Linux is not really viewed as the optimum editing environment by the artistic community, but that is changing. If you are willing to rethink how you do things, and be creative with your workflow, it is incredibly powerful. I use a Debian-based distribution called CrunchBang as a starting template for all of the computers in my workflow. It uses considerably fewer resources than most operating systems, and allows all of the available resources to be used for editing tasks. And because it is so modular, you can build machines to do specific things fairly easily without all the bloat of unnecessary software that comes prepackaged into other operating systems.

Aaron
TYREE-PHOTOGRAPHER

DO YOU SHOOT IN RAW MODE? IF SO, WHICH SOFTWARE DO YOU USE TO PROCESS RAW FILES?

I always shoot in RAW. The editing options that RAW provides are invaluable. I have done a lot of testing with the RAW editors that are available for Linux. My current RAW editor of choice is AfterShot Pro. It is the fastest and most stable RAW editor that I have come across that runs on Linux. The plugin framework is also pretty good. I wish that it were open source, but I don't think that is currently a priority for Corel.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO USE GIMP AND WHICH FEATURES DO YOU USE THE MOST?

I won't lie. I started using GIMP because I could not afford Photoshop. But at this point, I prefer GIMP. GIMP is a world-class editing tool. If you are willing to put in the time to learn how it works, it gives you a lot of freedom, and it has very few limitations. It also gives my images a different feel. Lots of people use Photoshop and buy the latest Photoshop actions pack. They use similar methods and get similar results. GIMP produces a different look that I like a lot.

As far as which features I use most, I'd have to say modes and masks. Paint and layer modes are dreamy, and there is not much you can't do with clever use of layer masks.

WHICH FEATURES WOULD YOU MOST WANT TO SEE IN UPCOMING VERSIONS OF GIMP?

As far as I know, both of the features I most want to see will be in version 2.10. These are higher bit capability and script recording. But if we are dreaming big, I would go with an API to directly access a running GIMP instance from a remote device, and the ability to easily choose the location of configuration files. Like a Dropbox folder for instance.





Aaron
TYREE-PHOTOGRAPHER

IF YOU COULD GO BACK IN TIME, WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE YOURSELF?

You are loved. Failure is a perspective that you can change. Feel the fear, do it anyway.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

Keep learning. Keep dreaming. Keep shooting. Put my work out there. I'm in this for the long haul.

FIND AARON TYREE IN THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS:

Personal website: <http://aarontyree.com/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AaronTyreePhotography>

Google+:

<https://plus.google.com/u/0/104341314301144658678/posts>

500px.com: <http://500px.com/aarontyree>

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AARON'S UPDATE

[This article was written several months before publishing. Since the time of writing and the time of publishing we at GIMP Magazine connected with Aaron and he provided the following update. -Ed]

A short time after writing this article, a competitive commercial software provider started offering an online subscription. It took me a couple of months to finally give in, but I eventually did. What I have found after using GIMP for years, and now using commercial software for a couple months, is this.

If you are interested only in creating art, you do not need commercial software. Yeah, I said it. In fact, in some ways, I think you are better off using GIMP. Ninety per cent of the tools in commercial software can be found in GIMP, and some tools in GIMP cannot be found in Photoshop. Also, the G'MIC project is nothing to scoff at. There are entire industries built around software suites that do what G'MIC does, and in some cases not as well. Between RawTherapee, GIMP, and G'MIC there is so much that you can do that it will take you a long time to bump up against their limitations, if you ever do. And if and when you do, the code is open, meaning you can create the tool you want or you can make a change yourself.

As far as why I made this choice, this is my full-time profession, and I won't lie. The way that commercial products work together has saved me so much time its hard to believe. I'm talking about a full day per client in some cases. This is invaluable to me. The commercial software provider has spent a lot of money designing their software to interact well and they have succeeded. There is also the reality that ALL of my peers use this commercial software. I don't mind being different, but some clients expect .psd files at the completion of a shoot, with layers intact. You will get tired of explaining what an .xcf file is, and why it's close to a .psd file, after the first client conversation. There are also a few areas of functionality in the commercial software that allow you to refine images in ways that are just beyond GIMP's current capabilities. I could elaborate on these, but I don't think it matters for the purpose of this article.

My point is this. For anyone who is wondering if they are missing out by not using commercial software, consider this. Unless you are pursuing image production and editing as a full-time career, I wouldn't bother with it. That's just my opinion. There is so much you can do with GIMP. Once you start wishing that you could blend a 3dLUT into zone 5 with a smooth gradient to more accurately reflect the tones of a print film pulled by two stops, you know what this means, and you are getting frustrated that you can't do that in GIMP, you might think about switching to commercial software. Until then, enjoy the freedom. ■



WE LOVE PIE AT GIMP MAGAZINE, SO MUCH SO THAT WE ARE DEDICATING AN ENTIRE ISSUE (SPRING 2015) TO PIE. WE ARE ASKING EVERYONE TO SUBMIT THEIR FAVORITE PIE PHOTOS (MACRO, FOCUS BLUR, ANY PHOTOGRAPHIC TECHNIQUE YOU LIKE), PIE GRAPHIC DESIGNS, AND EVEN PIE STORIES OF WHY YOU LOVE PIE.

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"MASK OF THE COCKATOO"



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The Raven

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping, at my chamber door.
"Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door—
Only this and nothing more."
— Edgar Allan Poe

Gimp  MAGAZINE®

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The Raven Calligraphy by Steve Czajka



◀ **GERALD SCHENK**

Title: Toy Toronto Street

Description: I like photography as it is the hobby where untalented nerds are able to pretend they can be creative and produce art, while, in fact, it is only sophisticated learning and imitating things learned from the net or books. GIMP is a logical extension to this. Still, the pretence of art is enough for me to be happy about it.

This image was made with the Focus Blur plugin by Kyoichiro Suda (<http://registry.gimp.org/node/8236>). It applies out-of-focus blur based on the value in a greyscale depth-map. Unlike regular blur filters, this plugin also simulates actual lens effects – a point is blurred to a disc with non-uniform density. Using a manually drawn depth map, the shallow depth of field of a close-up shot is simulated, while the object, in fact, is large in real life and is, in its entirety, beyond the hyperfocal distance.

Portfolio:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/60990146@N02/>



◀ JAN-HENDRIK CASPERS

Title: Treskowbrücke, Berlin, Germany

Description: I'm a software developer and photography is my hobby. I have used "The Gimp" since I started using Linux many years ago. This picture was taken on a foggy night and post-processed with UFRaw and GIMP.

Portfolio:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/96734916@N05/>

J-H
Caspers
2013



◀ SEAN MCLEAN

Title: Point Reyes Lighthouse

Description: I'm an amateur photographer and technology dude from around Santa Cruz, California. I feel a personal commitment to art and to open source software, especially since Linux changed nearly everything for me in 2000. I process all of my photos with GIMP and usually RawTherapee on either Linux Mint or Xubuntu.

This image is a favorite photo of the Point Reyes Lighthouse at Point Reyes National Seashore just before sunset. I shot it using a Canon 7D and a Sigma 17-50mm lens. Processing was done using GIMP 2.8 and RawTherapee on Xubuntu 13.10. The actual workflow included luminance masks in the light, mid, and dark ranges followed by just a little bit of unsharp mask.

Portfolio:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/55255576@N07/>

JEREMY GOOCH ►

Title: Zero-K Mech

Description: I work professionally as an interface designer, and I do freelance illustration as well. I enjoy working in a variety of mediums, but lately I have been working primarily in the digital realm. I've been using GIMP since 2008 and I've made it a personal mission to switch to entirely free software to create my artwork, so using GIMP was a natural transition for me. This artwork was created using GIMP 2.6 on Linux Mint 11.

Blog: <http://jeremygouch.blogspot.com/>





◀ GUSTAVO DEVEZE

Title: Urban scene... (escena urbana...)

Description: I am a visual artist living in Buenos Aires, Argentina. In my work the theme arises from the signs I suggest as a reaction to some day-to-day happenings, which can be an insistent idea or a phrase heard when passing by. In this way I begin to work, starting from the spots, looking for the forms (from the abstract I go towards the formation), and using the techniques of drawing and painting. My images are also occasionally accompanied by a short text.

For this image, I used GIMP 2.6 with a graphics tablet (6x8 inches). This image is composed of one layer with the black (lines, planes, and textures), another layer containing the color in Multiply mode, and a third layer with small retouches in Soft light mode.

Blog: <http://jeneverito.blogspot.com>

Bobolobo: <http://bobolobo.blogspot.com>

Website: <http://www.deveze.com.ar>

LUCIANO FREITAS

Title: Prometheus, free

Description: I'm an enthusiast of open source and free graphic software. As a student of cinema and audio/visual arts, I'm able to do drawings and take photographs, which is very important and useful for me. That's where GIMP, Inkscape, and Blender come into the picture. I used MakeHuman to create and model the human figure, then illuminated and rendered it in Blender, where I made the additional objects (chain and goggles). Afterwards I used GIMP with G'MIC filters and effects.



Oktoberfest

STEVE CZAJKA

Title: Oktoberfest

Description: This was authentically hand lettered using a Pilot Parallel calligraphy pen. It was scanned, and post processed using both GIMP and Inkscape. GIMP was used for cropping, curves, background removal, while Inkscape was used for colourization, and a ridges filter.

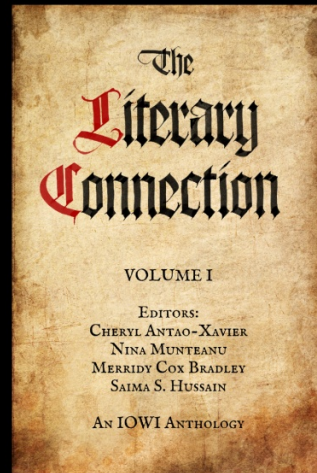
Website: <http://flickr.com/steveczajka>

Oktoberfest (CC-BY-ND) 2014

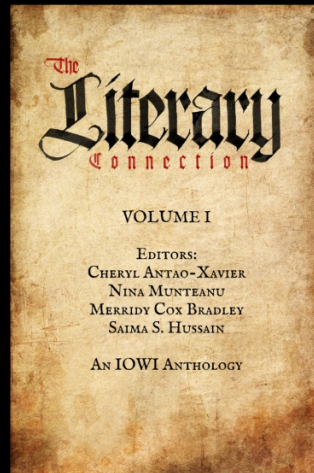


Steve Czajka Calligraphy

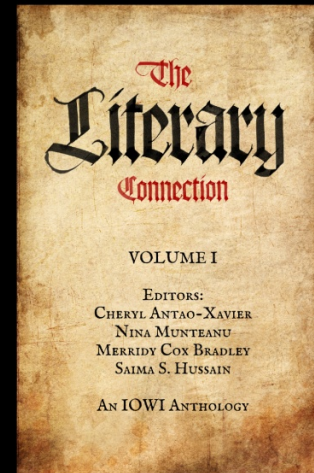
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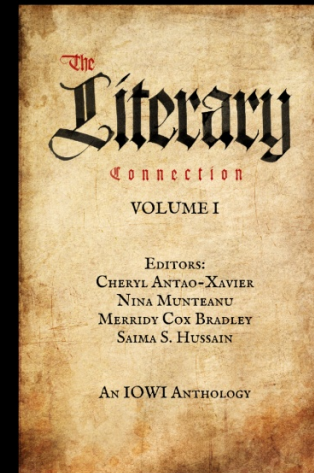
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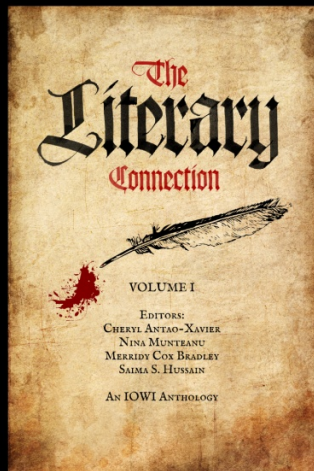
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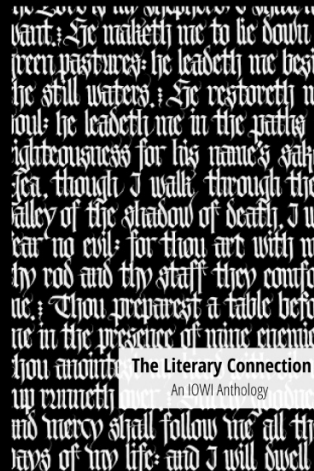
6



7



8



STEVE CZAJKA ►

Title: Literary Connection Book Cover Proposal
 Description: This was authentically hand lettered using a Pilot Parallel calligraphy pen. The digital typeface was completely processed using GIMP. The book cover design options were created using Inkscape, an amazing layout tool.
 Website: <http://flickr.com/steveczajka>



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BEFORE



AFTER

USING GIMP FOR PORTRAIT AND FASHION PHOTOGRAPHY

A Master Class by Aaron Tyree, Edited by Debi Dalio

In the process of learning effective photo editing techniques, I heard the following many times: “There are a lot of ways to edit photos, but if you want to achieve professional-level results you really have to use 'such and such' software.” Through trial and error I've come to the conclusion that while this can be true in some cases, it is most often not true. It greatly depends on your goal. If you want to shoot and edit photos for massive billboards, you will need very specific software. On the other hand, if your goal is to shoot and edit great photographs for yourself or for clients, your software selection is considerably less limited. When I started pursuing photography professionally, it was suggested to me by many photographers that GIMP was somehow restrictive in its photo editing capability. This is simply not true. I believe their remarks were a result of not having access to good information on how to interact with the incredibly powerful set of tools that GIMP contains.

This tutorial is an attempt to provide a “base system”, so to speak, for developing a personal editing style. It is a result of studying the editing techniques of many photographers and translating the tools that I saw commonly used into my GIMP workflow. I use GIMP on the majority of the images I produce. I have chosen not to go into great detail with each filter, tool, or technique by covering all of their capabilities. I will, instead, be focusing more on what I seem to use most often.

This tutorial assumes two things:

1. That you know how to get a good exposure in camera.
2. That, if you shoot RAW, you can use the RAW editor of your choice to make adjustments, then export the image to GIMP.

We will start at the point of having imported an image into GIMP.

I will be covering the following in GIMP 2.8:

- iWarp
- Wavelet Decompose
- Cloning and Healing
- Spotlighting
- Curves
- Unsharp Mask

iWARP

iWarp is a transform tool that allows you to move, shrink, grow, and otherwise bend the pixels within an image to your will. There is no shortage of controversy surrounding the use of this tool thanks to its overuse in fashion magazines. For me, the purpose of iWarp is to make subtle adjustments to perspective anomalies in an image, not to make every woman look like Jessica Rabbit. iWarp should be used sparingly, as it is quite obvious when it's used too liberally.

You can find this filter through Filters > Distorts > iWarp.

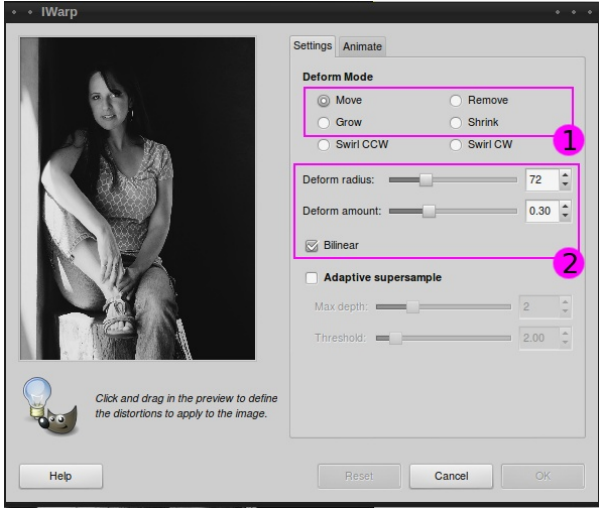


Figure 1.

The filter settings I use most frequently are the Deform Modes shown in box 1. They are Move, Grow, and Shrink, which allow you to stretch, expand, and shrink parts of the image by dragging the mouse on the preview image.

The variable settings shown in box 2 adjust how the Deform Mode affects the image. The Deform radius

defines the radius, in pixels, of the filter action circle around the pixel pointed to by the mouse. The Deform amount sets limits on how much the area can be deformed in relation to surrounding pixels. The Bilinear option improves the relationship between affected pixels, resulting in a smoother appearance of the affected area. For this particular adjustment, I have selected a deform radius of 72, and have left all the other settings at their defaults. The deform radius is the primary adjustment that I find myself using, often leaving all others in their default state.



Figure 2.

In this example image, iWarp has been used to remove the bulging of the arm where it is pressed against the leg and the bulging of the upper arm where it is pressed against the rear wall. The adjustments are subtle, which is the goal.

For a more in-depth description of iWarp's controls, visit <http://docs.gimp.org/en/plugin-iwarp.html>.

WAVELET DECOMPOSE

One of my very least liked things in fashion and portrait images is over-edited skin where the result looks something like polished latex. The Wavelet Decompose

filter in GIMP is a great way to avoid this. Wavelet Decompose losslessly decomposes a layer of an image into layers of wavelet scales. Or, more simply put, it separates the detail of an image into multiple editable layers with detail levels progressing from fine to coarse. This allows you to remove coarse detail while leaving fine detail undisturbed.

I use Wavelet Decompose primarily for skin retouching. The benefit is that pores and other common skin details are contained in the finer detail layers, whereas larger blemishes are contained in the larger grain detail layers. This means you can erase imperfections while leaving pores and fine textures unchanged.

To use Wavelet Decompose, you must first download it from the GIMP Plugin Registry at <http://registry.gimp.org/node/11742> and install it in your GIMP 2/lib/gimp/2.0/plugin-ins folder. If you are using Windows and would prefer to use a tool that helps you install plugins (plus provides a wide variety of plugins), you can download the GIMP Extensions Pack for Windows from <http://registry.gimp.org/node/27656>. For Mac users, Simone Karin Lehmann does some great builds for Mac with many extra filters and plugins compiled in. You can find her work at <http://gimp.lisanet.de/Website/News/News.html>. Once the Wavelet Decompose plugin is installed, you can find it through Filters > Generic > Wavelet decompose.

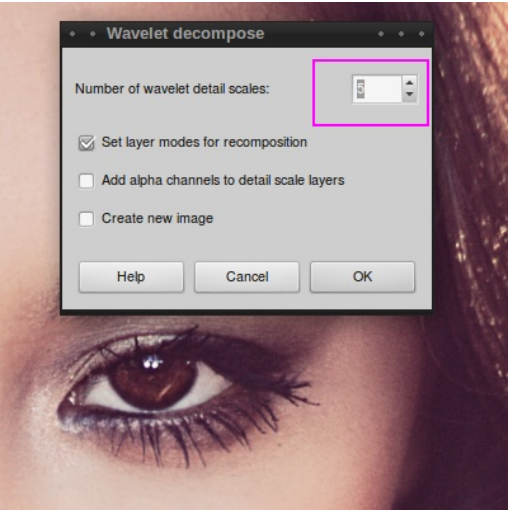


Figure 3.

Wavelet Decompose has a control dialog that pops up when you select it. The default settings and number of detail layers are usually sufficient. When you click OK, the currently active layer is separated into five layers of detail, with layer 1 being the most fine and layer 5 being the most coarse, plus a residual layer of everything that's left over.

The majority of skin imperfections that photographers will desire to remove are now contained in Wavelet scales 4 and 5. You can either use the Eraser tool to remove unwanted details in each layer, using the eraser's opacity to control the level of removal, or use the method that I prefer.

I like to create a layer mask by right-clicking on "Wavelet scale 5" and selecting Add Layer Mask.

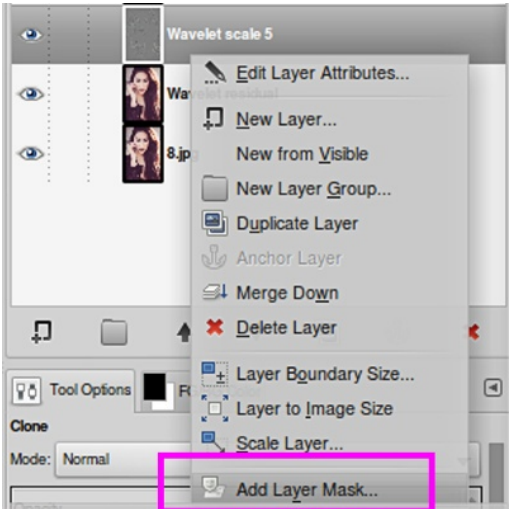


Figure 4.

I initialize the Layer Mask to “White (full opacity)”.

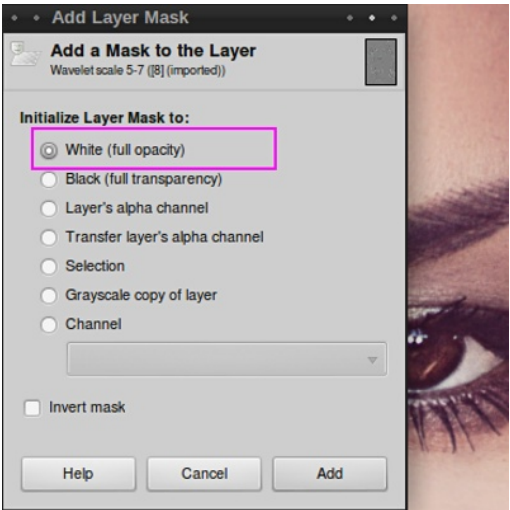


Figure 5.

Painting on the layer mask with black will reduce detail based on the opacity of the paintbrush.

A bonus of using Wavelet Decompose is that you can also use it to sharpen areas of an image.

You will notice that under the Wavelet scale layers is a layer called “Wavelet residual”. Since all of the detail of the image is contained in the Wavelet scale layers, the residual layer is essentially “not detail”. By erasing parts of this layer, you are effectively removing “not detail” and leaving only detail. This means you can easily sharpen selected areas, such as eyes, or bring out line details by tracing along them. You can control the amount of sharpening by adjusting the opacity of the eraser tool. More opacity equals more sharpening, less opacity equals less sharpening.

Experimentation is the best way to learn how to use this filter, and, with some familiarization, the end result can look like the right-hand side of this before and after image:



Figure 6.

CLONING AND HEALING

If you do portrait and/or fashion photography, you’ll find that the Clone and Healing tools are your friends. For removing little blemishes from skin, the Healing tool is the way to go. And for lightening circles under the eyes, the Clone tool is hard to beat. When using these

tools, I rarely use anything other than a circular 50% hardness brush. You can get all intense about which brush to use for which situation, but, in practice, I find that it’s rare for me to change my brush selection. But, of course, you should develop your own style.

THE CLONE TOOL

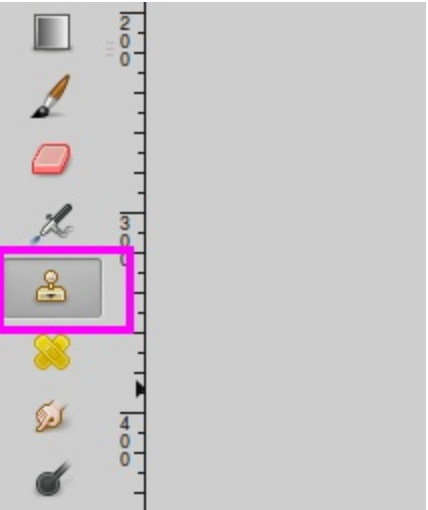


Figure 7.

The Clone tool uses a brush to copy from one area of an image and paint over another area. This tool has a multitude of uses. You can remove people from the background of an image, remove stray hairs, and so forth. This example demonstrates one method of using the Clone tool to lighten dark circles under the eyes.

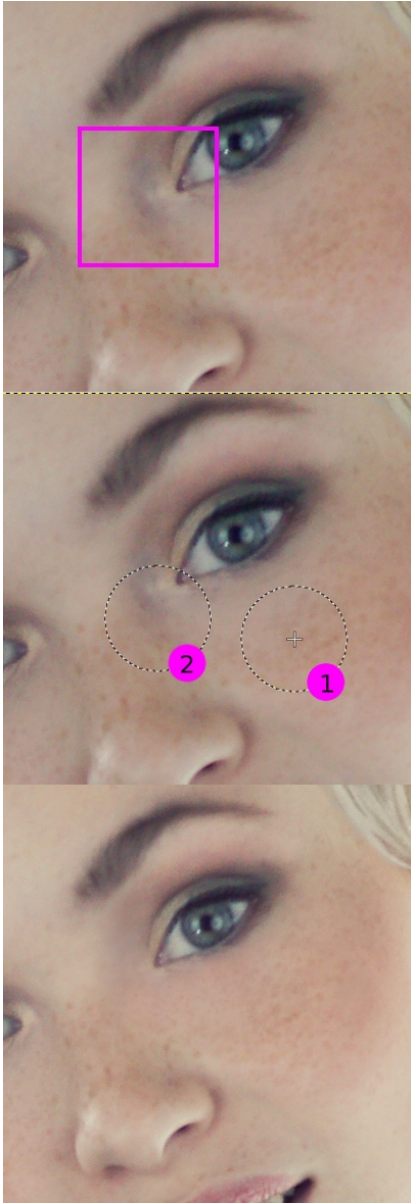


Figure 8.

You can see by the square in the first image the area that I wish to lighten. In the next image, the first circle is the selection area that I will be cloning from. The second circle is the area where I will be cloning to. The last image is the end result.

The Clone tool looks like a rubber stamp with a handle (Shortcut: C). You mark the area you wish to clone from by holding down the Ctrl key and left-clicking on the image at a point that you want to copy. In this case, I selected a skin area that is light compared to the dark area I wanted to lighten. For a more subtle lightening effect, I changed the Clone tool's opacity to 10%. Once I had selected an appropriate brush, all that remained was to paint over the destination area.

THE HEALING TOOL

The Healing tool is similar to the Clone tool, but with one significant difference. While the Clone tool copies pixels from one area and replaces the pixels in another, the Healing tool copies pixels from one area, then blends them with the pixels in another. The result of healing can be smoother in appearance than that of cloning, and is usually the best way to remove blemishes from skin.

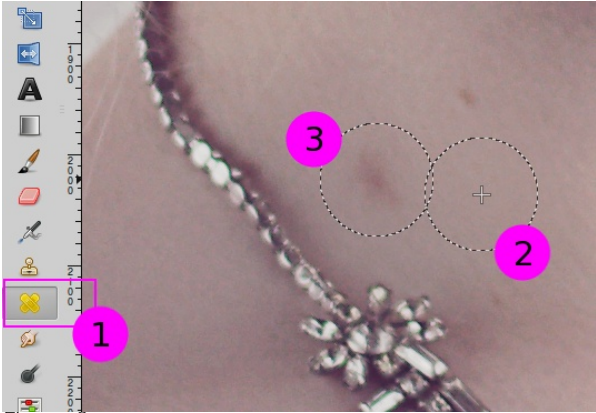


Figure 9.

In the above image, box 1 is the Healing tool icon, which looks like crossed bandages (Shortcut: H). Circle 2 is the sample area and circle 3 is the area I want to heal. I set the opacity much higher with the Healing tool than with the Clone tool because of how it blends with the surrounding pixels.

Before and after:

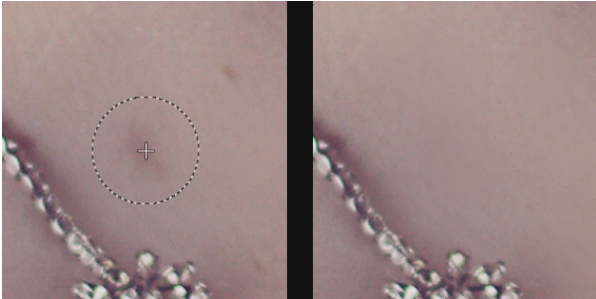


Figure 10.

SPOTLIGHTING

This is more of a technique than a tool, but I have found myself using it more and more to enhance the feeling

and lighting in an image. Essentially it consists of creating a transparent layer, creating a radial gradient on the new transparent layer over a specific area of an image that you want to lighten, then changing the layer mode to Soft light. From there you can change the layer's opacity to adjust the intensity of the "light". Using this method, you can enhance existing lighting or even simulate another light source in some cases. I'll walk through the steps.

1. Create a new layer and, when prompted, select Transparency for the layer type.

2. Select the Blend tool. (Shortcut: L)

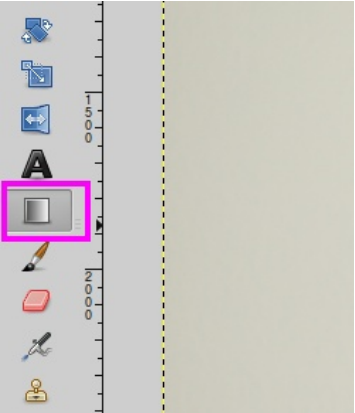


Figure 11.

3. In the Tool Options dialog for the Blend tool, set the Blend Mode to Normal, set the Gradient to "FG to Transparent", and set the Shape to Radial.

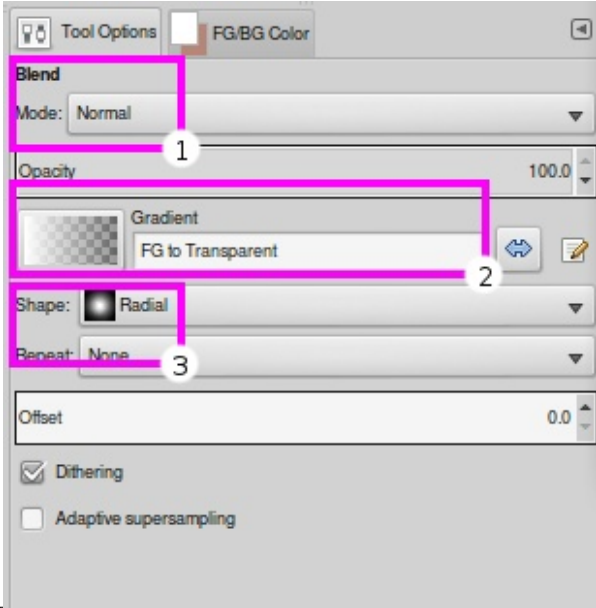


Figure 12.

4. Make sure your foreground color is set to white, then, on the newly created transparent layer, put the cursor where you would like the light to be centered. Left-click with your mouse and hold. Pull the cursor away in any direction until you reach the edge of where you would like the light to be, then release the mouse button. The result should look similar to this:



Figure 13.

5. Now, using the drop-down Mode menu at the top of the Layers dialog, change the mode of the layer from Normal to Soft light. Use the layer Opacity slider to adjust the amount and intensity of the light.

Before and after:

Aaron
TYREE-PHOTOGRAPHER



Figure 14.



Figure 15.

There is another way that I use this technique regularly. Rather than using the Dodge tool to lighten eyes, I create a transparent layer, select a round 50% hardness brush, and reduce the size of the brush so that I can paint with white directly over the whites of the eyes.



Figure 16.

By changing the layer mode of this transparent layer to Soft light, I can control the lightness of the eyes by adjusting the layer's opacity. I prefer this to dodging and burning since a soft light adjustment from the layer above seems to leave the pixels of the image looking more natural.

These are just two uses for the technique of painting or laying color on a transparent layer and changing the layer mode. By experimenting with gradient shapes and various colors you can come up with interesting effects. You can simulate light flares, change and augment

colors, darken and lighten specific areas, and so forth.

CURVES

In the photo world right now, filters are all the rage. Instagram, the majority of online editors, and even most Photoshop actions have contributed largely to this trend. What you may not know is that many of these filters are just a manipulation of Value and RGB curves. Contrast, color toning, and white and black point adjustments can all be accomplished with curves. This topic could take up its own lengthy tutorial, but I'll attempt to offer a simple example to get you started.

Select Colors > Curves to open the Curves dialog.

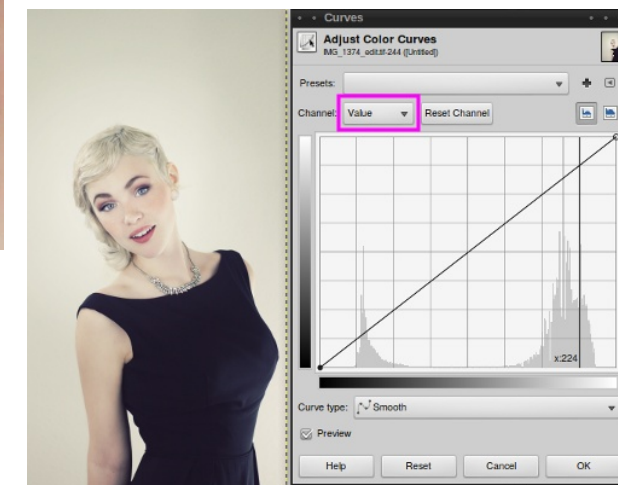


Figure 17.

Click on the Channel drop-down menu and you will see five options:

- 1. Value
- 2. Red
- 3. Green
- 4. Blue
- 5. Alpha

We will focus on Value, Red, Green, and Blue.

The Value curve is fairly straight forward. If you were to convert your image to black and white, every pixel in the image would be some value between black and white. The Value curve adjusts the blacks and whites of your image, plus all of the greys in between. By selecting any point on the line, you can move that point up or down, and make it more white or more black.

On the left, the point at the bottom represents black and affects the darkest parts of your image. On the right, the point at the top represents white and affects the lightest parts of your image. By moving the black point on the bottom left upward, you will be lightening shadows. By moving the white point at the top downward, you will be darkening the highlights. So again, by selecting any point on the diagonal line, and moving it up or down, you will lighten or darken that Value in the image.

Color curves are similar, but operate slightly differently. To understand how they work, think not only of red, green, and blue, but also their opposites. When you look at colors on a color wheel, red is opposite cyan, green is opposite magenta, and yellow is opposite blue.

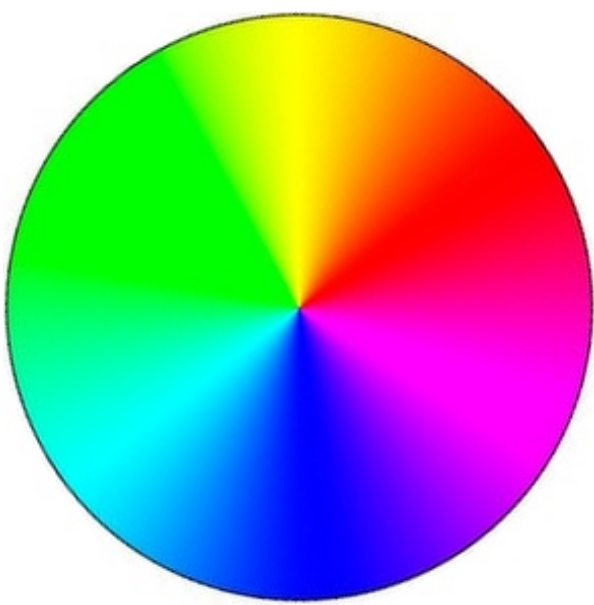


Figure 18.

With color curves, moving a point on a curve up will increase that color. Moving a point on the curve down will increase its opposite. For example, with the Red curve selected, if you want more red in the image, drag the curve up. If you want more cyan in the image, drag the red curve down. For the green curve, up means more green, down means more magenta. And for the blue curve, up means more blue, and down means more yellow.

That is reasonably simple. But you need to put both concepts together to understand how to use curves well. Simply put, when using a Red, Green, or Blue curve, if you want to adjust a color in the shadows, then move the curve up or down near the bottom left where the curves affect the darkest part of the image. The middle of the curve will adjust the midtones. If you want

to adjust a color in the highlights, move the curve up or down on the top right, where the curve affects the lightest part of the image.

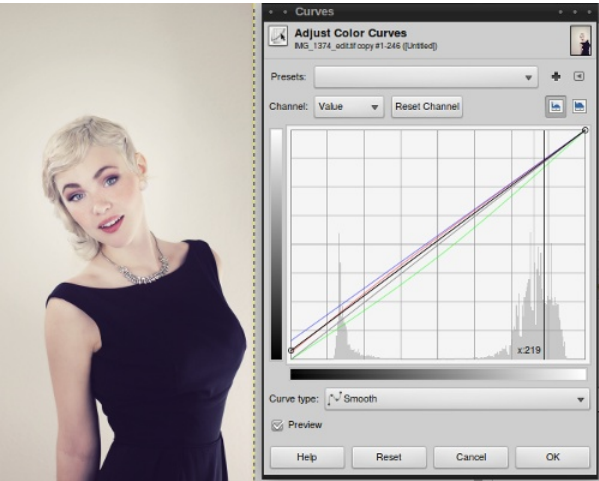


Figure 19

In this image you can see that I lightened the shadows a little using the Value curve, added some blue to the shadows using the Blue curve, added magenta to the midtones by pulling the Green curve down, and finished by adding a little red to both the shadows and midtones.

This will, of course, require experimentation, but as you grasp how the various curves work, you will realize that a whole lot of the editing that is commonly done to an image can all be accomplished in the Curves dialog.

UNSHARP MASK

I often wait until the end of an editing session to sharpen an image, and only sharpen when the image is at its final resolution. There are differing opinions on

this, but it is what I find myself doing most often. The sharpening method that is pretty much my go-to is Unsharp Mask.

Unsharp Mask essentially uses layers, Gaussian blur, and color inversion to enhance borders in an image. It gives the image a sharper appearance without using sharpening methods that increase image noise. As with all editing techniques, preferred methods are subjective, but I find that I prefer the look of Unsharp Mask to most other sharpening methods.

The Unsharp Mask filter that comes with GIMP is very functional. You can find it at:

Filters > Enhance > Unsharp Mask

You will be presented with this dialog box:

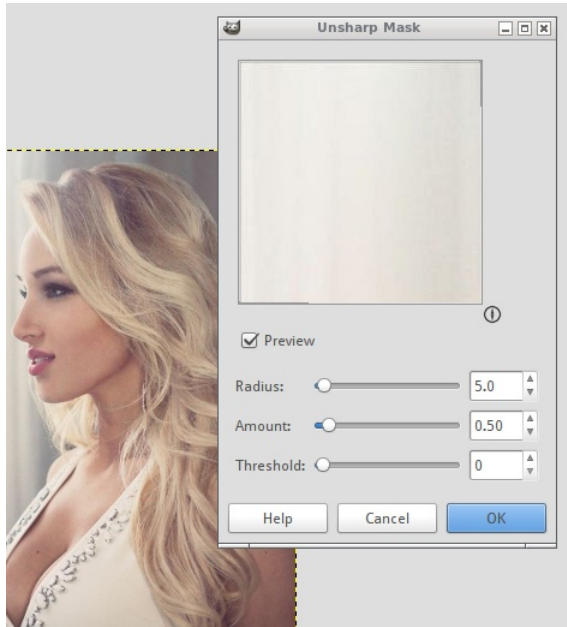


Figure 20.

There are three primary options for this filter: Radius, Amount, and Threshold. Amount is fairly self-explanatory. It indicates how much emphasis is to be used on borders. I'll focus here on the Radius and Threshold sliders.

The simplest way to understand Radius is to first understand what is meant by a border. Borders are noticeable color and value transitions in an image. Simply put, the edge of a dress, or the transition from iris to pupil in an eye, is a border. Since Unsharp Mask emphasizes borders, Radius is essentially how many pixels away from the border you want that emphasis to be noticeable.

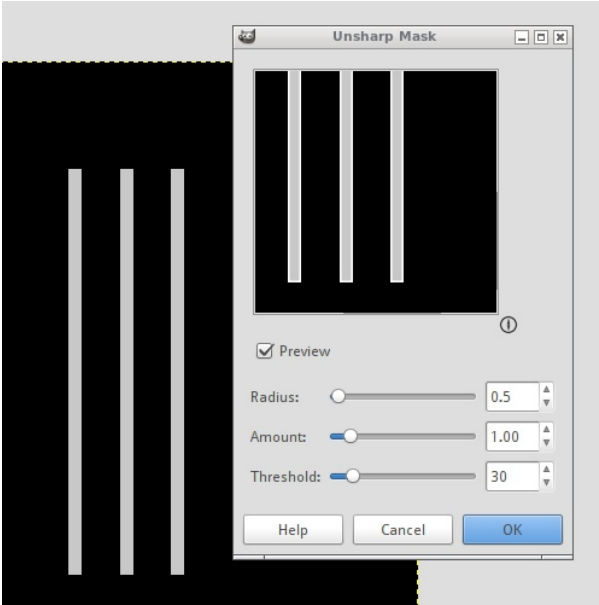


Figure 21.

As a visual example, you can see how the border of the grey bars will be emphasized in white. This is with a fairly low radius.

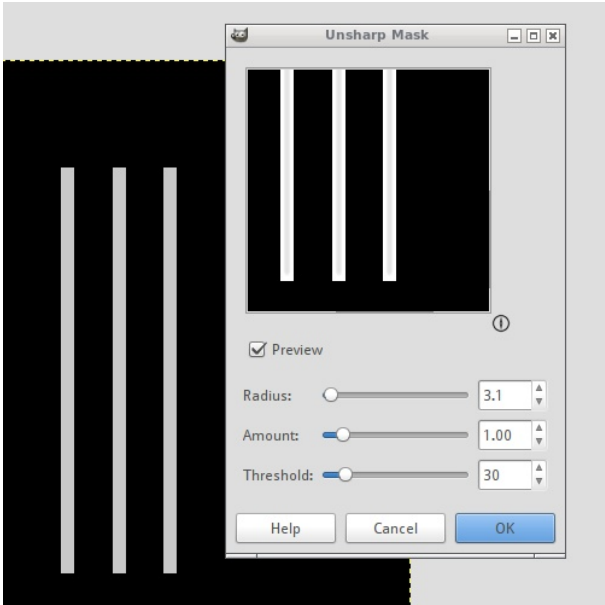


Figure 22.

You can see here that the grey bars now have a white gradient around their borders that extends further than in the first image because the Unsharp Mask filter radius has been increased.

So, by adjusting the radius of the unsharp mask, you will increase or decrease how far away from the border the emphasis extends.

Threshold is a bit simpler. In practical terms, Threshold controls the filter's sensitivity to borders. So if you want to emphasize the borders of the eyes or the lips, for example, but don't want to emphasize the borders of subtle transitions in the skin, then raising the threshold will decrease the filter's sensitivity to border transitions in an image. If you want detail emphasized in every little pixel, then lowering the Threshold will increase the filter's sensitivity to border transitions. There is

technically more to it, but this generalization will give you a practical working understanding of how to use it. If you would like to dig deeper, you can find a technical description here: <http://docs.gimp.org/en/plugin-unsharp-mask.html>.

The default slider settings for Unsharp Mask are very usable in most instances, but experimentation is always recommended.

Here is one final recommendation when using Unsharp Mask. Before using it, separate your image into HSV layers (hue, saturation, and value), and apply the Unsharp Mask to the Value layer. The value layer simplifies all of the borders in an image by getting color out of the way. The edges seem a little sharper, and there seems to be less noise in the final image.

To separate an image into HSV layers, choose Colors > Components > Decompose, change the Color model to HSV, and click OK. A new window will open with your image separated into Hue, Saturation, and Value layers. Make sure the Value layer is selected, then apply the Unsharp Mask filter to it. After sharpening, choose Colors > Components > Recompose and GIMP will recompose the three layers back onto the layer from which you did the decompose.

So there it is. For better or for worse. I hope that with some experimentation you will find using these image adjustment steps helpful, and will be pleased with the results you get.

Happy editing! ■



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