



Digital Photography

For beginners

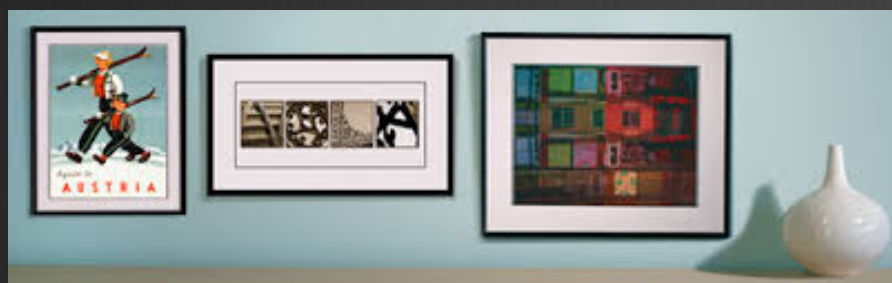
Week 9

In this session:

- ❖ Constructive Critique
- ❖ Monitor Calibration
- ❖ ProAm Imaging
- ❖ Print profiles
- ❖ Printing
- ❖ Portfolios
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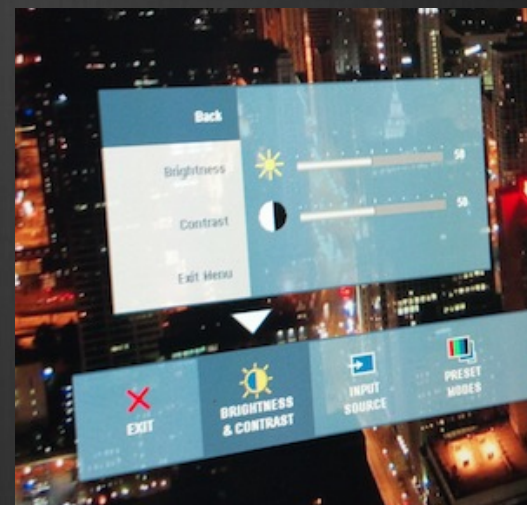
Critique



Monitor Calibration

Familiarize Yourself with Your Display's Controls

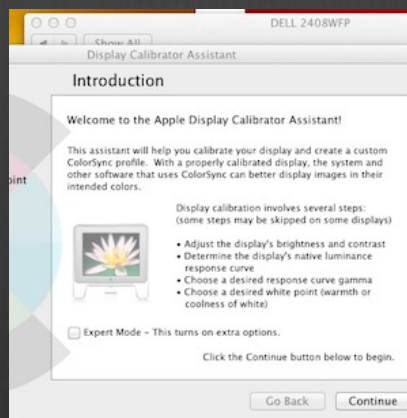
Before you begin, make sure your display has been on for at least a half-hour (so it's properly warmed up) and are set to its native screen resolution. Even if you use it at a different resolution (and we can't imagine why), set it back to its native resolution while you calibrate it. Then, make sure you know your way around the controls for your display. This shouldn't be difficult to do—just take a look at the front of the panel. You'll likely see buttons near the power button to do things like switch inputs and open and navigate the on-screen options menu. These menus vary across display manufacturers, so there's no one way to open these menus and navigate them, but you want to find your colour, contrast, and brightness controls. Once you find them, you're ready to get started.



The Quick and Dirty Method: Use The Built-In Calibration Tool

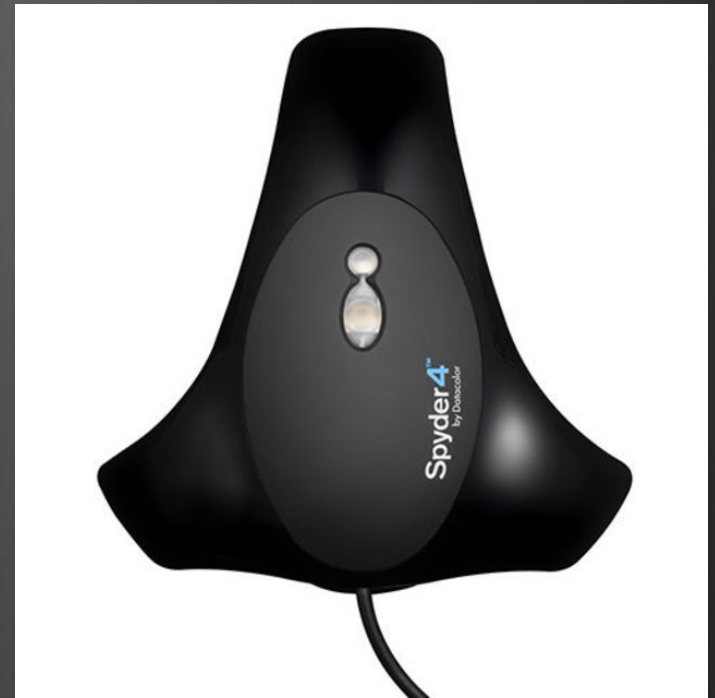
First, reset your display to its default values. Even if you're played with the on-screen controls in the past, you don't want any errors of the past to change how you use your monitor today. Use the on-screen menus to reset the display to the manufacturer's defaults. Then you can use your computer's built-in calibration tool to tweak the display to your liking.

Mac OS and Windows both have built-in display calibration utilities that walk you through a series of steps to build and save a calibration profile. In Windows, the display calibration tool is in the Display Control Panel, and in Mac OS, if you open the Display System Preferences and click the Colour tab, you'll see the button to calibrate. The calibration tool will walk you through configuring your computer's contrast and brightness, colour temperature, and gamma correction, and will adjust the image from your computer's graphics card on the fly as you make changes.



The Pricier, More Accurate Method: Buy a Calibration Tool

Going by sight should be enough for people who just want to be able to watch a YouTube video or browse their photo library without everything looking weird, but professionals need a level of accuracy that by-sight calibration may not offer. If you do any kind of photo editing, video editing, or rely on the colour accuracy of your displays for your work, you may want to take calibrating your monitors a step further and spend a few bucks on calibration software and a colorimeter. A colourimeter is a device that attaches to the front of your display and "sees" the colour levels generated by your display and adjusts your OS to compensate. Some of them even support multiple displays, and can walk you through adjusting the settings for each display to get the best possible colour values.



The Spyder4Pro from Datacolor will set you back about £150, connects to your computer via USB, and mounts on the face of your monitor to automatically calibrate it for you. The Spyder4Pro is designed primarily for people who need to calibrate their display against colour prints.

ProAm Imaging

QUALITY - **ProAm Imaging** are the only photofinisher ever to win the SWPP/The Societies 'Best Professional Lab' for 4 years running thanks to the high quality of their prints and the helpful, friendly service.

PRICE – Although **ProAm** only use the best Fuji Crystal Archive DP2 professional paper (with 100 year 'no fade' guarantee) in their state-of-the-art D-Lab 2+ printing machines, prints cost a fraction of the price charged by many of our larger competitors. (e.g. A4 only 60p / A3 just £1.15)

Why are print profiles important?

In order to achieve an exact colour replica of the image on your screen, it's necessary to use the same colour profile as the equipment being used.

All printers come with a CD which contains the profile for the make and model of printer purchased, installing the profile is usually straight forward, click on the install icon and let the computer do the rest.

Printing

Inkjet Printers

As an example the Epson SureColor P600 (\$800) has a nine-colour ink system that easily handles even the subtlest shading. It's a pigment printer, which is usually the better choice over dye. Pigment rests the ink on top of the paper, while dye sinks in. Dye is slightly more vibrant, but unless you put it under UV glass, any exposure to sunlight will fade a dye image in a few months. Pigment-printed photos are rated for 200 years, even when on display.

Paper

The right paper will make the difference between a good photograph and a great one. The subject will dictate which type to use.

Action shots, like sports or wildlife: Use a glossed paper (this includes semi-gloss, luster, or satin). The finish accommodates a wide range of hues, making details extra sharp, and the reflective coating makes subjects in motion appear even more dynamic. One warning: The glare makes glossy paper bad for framing under glass. You'll want to matte them instead.

Portraits, landscapes, and black-and-whites: Matte paper adds a slightly dreamy quality to any picture. It also absorbs dark colours and handles varying textures that can get lost in glossy prints.

Portfolio

What Is a Portfolio?

A photographic portfolio is quite simply a collection of work. The common misconception is that it is required to be a 'best of' of all the work you've ever done. Although this can be true in some cases, it is more likely to be a series of work with a unifying theme, style or taken through a specific medium.

What Is It For?

A portfolio is an opportunity for you to present your work, but it is important to consider what the portfolio is for. Are you taking it to a job interview, or are you looking to get your work exhibited at a gallery? Maybe you just want to bring your work together to present it?

Whatever the reason, it is vital that you create your portfolio with this in mind. A job interview might require you to display a variety of skills and techniques, whereas a collection for an exhibition would require a single unifying theme and will need to be presented with the gallery setting in mind.

Your Audience

Once you've decided your intentions for your portfolio, you need to consider the audience you're looking to reach. Try to consider what reaction you want to evoke - do you want them to be pleased, surprised, shocked? Not everyone is going to want to see your favourite landscape shot or generic shots that they see day in day out, so do your best to make your shots stand out and get the reaction you want.

Paper vs. Digital

At this point you need to decide what format your portfolio is presented in. In the past, everything was on paper, but technology has introduced the option of presenting your portfolio on a PDF, JPEGs or through an online medium. Being able to email a link to your portfolio through to potential employers is obviously extremely convenient.

I would argue that the process and final product of a beautifully printed out paper portfolio far outweighs the option of viewing photos on screen. For more on presenting an online portfolio.

Style & Design

It's now time to consider the style and design of your portfolio. You'll need a folder or portfolio case to hold it all in, but before you head out to buy something, consider what size you want your printed out shots to be. I would recommend something fairly large - maybe 20x30cm or about A4.

You then need to select the paper to print on and the print quality, preferably as high as you can afford. This said, remember there are no restrictions on size, shape or style - the more personal it is and the more it says about you as an photographer, the better.

Theme

Next you'll want to consider what theme or style you want your portfolio to have. This will depend upon your audience. For a job taking portraits, you should only include your portrait work. You could have a collection of black and white or sepia work, a set of shots taken with a specific camera format or a collection of shots from a specific time period or geographical region.

If you are looking to mix up types and styles of shots, make sure you have a valid reason for doing so. Remember that regardless of the theme, you should ensure a consistent colour balance and quality throughout the set of work.

Choosing the Shots

The most difficult part of creating a portfolio is selecting the shots. There's always a huge temptation to just select your favourites, but a photographer isn't always the best judge of their own work as they take into consideration the setting, effort and editing taken to create the shot.

Try to get some help from someone whose judgement you trust and will be impartial. I'd suggest aiming to end up with a set of 20-30 shots, but gradually remove more until you've got the desired collection of 8 to 10. If a shot has any flaws, or is out of focus, leave it out. It's much better to have a few perfectly executed shots, than a large collection of fairly good shots.

Presentation

The presentation of the shots is vital to the reaction from viewers. A badly presented collection of great photographs just won't do them justice and you'll come away disappointed. Think carefully about how to enhance the images through presentation techniques, borders and the colour of the backing sheet.

It's also important to consider the order of the shots, whether they are arranged chronologically or to create a particular mood. When choosing a title image, don't just choose your favourite. Try and select something that captures the essence of the collection.

Contents

Once you've got the shot layout sorted, you need to consider what other elements you might want to include in your portfolio. It's totally up to you, but things to consider are:

- ❖ An artistic statement - outlining your concept or theme and personal information
- ❖ A list of shots included
- ❖ Titles for shots and a brief explanation
- ❖ Date/location of shot
- ❖ A thumbnail contact sheet

You may feel that you want the shots to do all the talking, or it might be necessary to give each shot some background contextual information. It's up to you, but remember to keep it brief. You want people to be looking at the shots, not reading waffle about how you climbed a mountain at 5 AM to get the shot.

What Do I Do Now?

Try not to be tempted to add to your portfolio once it's finished. You'll always take better shots in the future, but I'd suggest that a portfolio is a collection of what you've done, and adding to it will spoil the continuity and thought that you've put into collating it. However, if you really want to add a new image, remove the worst shot and replace it with the new one, bearing in mind the continuity of the portfolio.

Now it's time to show your portfolio to the world. Share it with family and friends and get some feedback, which may give you a chance to practice talking about your work in preparation for any potential interviews you might get.



Assignment 9

Produce 3 A4 printed images

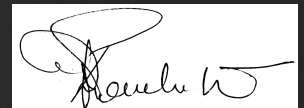
For assignment 9 you are required to select 3 of your best images from this course and print them in A4 or A3, please do not print them at home unless you have a photographic printer as these will be the starting point of your portfolio.

You will also need to attach a label with a title, the settings of the shot and a brief explanation as to why you chose that particular image.

NEXT WEEK

As next week will be your final week you will need to complete the paperwork for the college, also, it's show & tell time, you will all vote on your favourite image from the last 9 weeks (not your own), the image with the most votes will win the converted Den's Malteser Award, which consists of a single Malteser.

I hope you have had some fun, and learnt something along the way.
Please remember Photography should be fun and rewarding in the finished product.



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