

## BOOK REVIEW

Title: "Photoshop, Restoration and Retouching"

Author: Katrin Eismann

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Review by: Fred Offenbach

You should know that I am a Photoshop Elements user and not a Photoshop user, but since the programs are so similar in many areas I was very interested in perhaps learning skills that I could use with PSE. In fact, the author delves into many areas that are absolutely identical with PSE; beyond that, there are many workarounds that can be used to achieve the end product, even though PSE does not have certain features. I will be getting version 6/Mac of PSE within a week of writing this review, and I am looking forward to many of the features that are in PS and presently not in PSE -- the V.6 program will handle RAW files, and it has curves, a feature that most PS 'snobs' have held up as a real deficiency in PSE. So, even though you are a PSE student you will find this book worth more than a casual look.

This is not a digital manipulation cookbook but rather it is an explanation of what must be done, and how to do it. I became fascinated with the author's insight into what is going on, and because of that I found myself thinking PSE even when she is talking PS. I also found many great 'tips' that are scattered around and are applicable to PSE as well as PS.

The book takes off from where many of my books stop, in that she goes into details that just are not usually written about. One of the weaknesses of the book might be the indexing which is 13 pages long; since there is so much detail in the book, it justifies an index of twice the length. I guess that this statement is a compliment of the content, not so much a criticism of the index; it just means that you must study the details more. And speaking of details, there is so much written about touching up with the clone and healing tools that it should completely answer any of your questions, and maybe answer questions that you didn't even ask; techniques of using layers in coordination with the healing tools, of techniques for using the healing tools that are not obvious.

There is a section on the use of tools, and most of the tools are also found in PSE.

There is a large section on improving tone and contrast, use of curves, and blending modes. It's interesting that there isn't more photos on blending modes; rather, there is a description of each mode, but it would be much better if it was also accompanied by photos demonstrating the blending mode.

There is a large section on repairing old photos and negatives, with techniques that are very new to me and worthwhile.

25% of the book covers retouching of portraits and glamour shots. Lots of new ideas, but maybe only for that exceptional photo.

My comment is that I usually am not that fussy, but occasionally I have come upon a problem that seems impossible to fix -- and that is where she takes off, showing techniques that are wild. If you want to get more insight into layers, this is a good starting point. No, the book is not ALL about layers, and I would like to have seen more of that subject; but, layers are in integral part of nearly everything that is done in the book, usually with an explanation of what is happening. I guess if you want to know everything about layers you will have to take a look at another one of her books, Photoshop Masking and Compositing.

The book is very generously illustrated with color prints, which are necessary with this type of book, but often are not as well done. I find about 5 color photos on each page, making any technique well illustrated. The book also references a web site that contains dozens of photos that are used in the book, so that you can download them and practice with the identical photos.

This book is not for a PSE or PS beginner! It is for you people who have played and/or struggled with some of the tools, techniques, and idiosyncrasies of both programs, and who need a place to go for some answers. To those intermediate and advances learners I strongly recommend that you take a look at this book.