



Creative Images for the Digital Photographer

Mesquite Flat Dunes

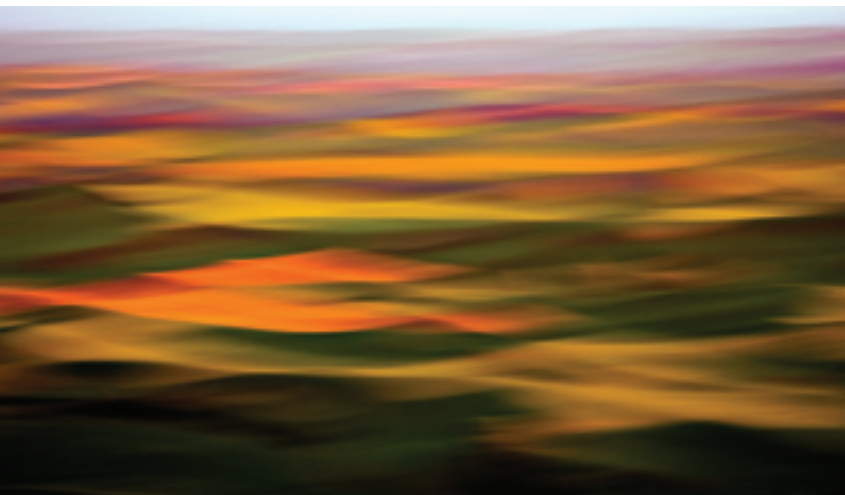
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Freeman Patterson says in his wonderful book *The Garden*, “There are many times when a photographer or painter’s sense of and feeling for a place can be expressed better with an impression than with a literal image. The sense or feeling is as important a reality as the place itself, and that’s what the artist wants to evoke or express.” As photographers we have a number of tools at our disposal to express this impression: such as camera movement, multiple exposures, image overlay and post processing techniques.

Camera Movement

Sometimes called “swipes” or pans, moving your camera can be a fun, creative way to paint with

The Palouse



light and express the feelings Freeman is speaking about. A good place to start is to dial in an exposure of at least 1/5 of a second. Pre-visualize the scene to determine how far you want to move the camera during the exposure and then give it a try. You might experiment with exposure values of 1/15, 1/2 or even 3 to 5 seconds. Each will give you a different look and thus create a different impression or feeling. Don’t get frustrated with the results; this technique takes practice to learn what combination of shutter speed and camera movement is best. The good news is the digital age has made learning this technique affordable and much easier with the instant feedback. You will want to experiment with the speed of your camera movement as well. With 1/15 of second you will need to move swiftly. With a 3 to 5 second exposure, you will be able to carefully paint by moving slowly, and in various directions in the same frame. You might even try squiggly lines like the *Fall in the Poconos* image. Moving quickly helps to create some defined lines whereas moving slowly creates a more painterly looking softer image.

Multiple Exposure

For the digital photographer there are two ways to create this effect. A few cameras have multiple exposure capability built in. The others will need to use Photoshop® to assemble them.

For those who own Nikon® digital SLR’s you can do multiples in-camera with a number of their



Fall in the Poconos

models. The D80 has the ability to do a three-shot multiple while the D200, D300, D700 and D3 are all capable of up to 10 shot multiples. Check your manual or specification sheet to learn how many each model can do.

Multiple exposures are great fun but also take a fair amount of practice. The Nikon shooter has the advantage of being able to review the results in the field and make the necessary adjustments. Another benefit of the in-camera capability is that you do not have to assemble them in Photoshop.

The Technique

Start by trying an 8-shot multiple. Pre-visualize the amount of space you will have to move over the 8 shots by looking through your viewfinder and

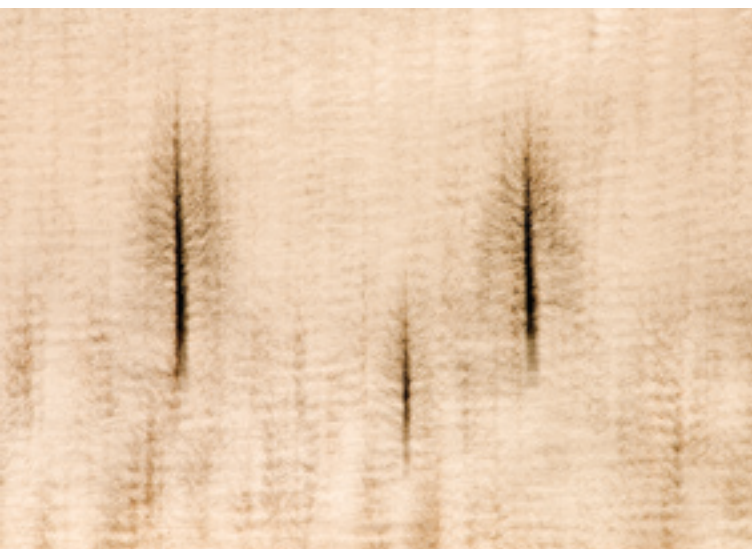
counting the imagined shots. Be sure to keep your camera movement very small between each shot. Typically you would move your camera in the implied direction of your subject. In this scene of a grove of trees in the Palouse, the 8-shot multiple was created by moving in small increments starting at the bottom of the scene and moving up to the top.

For those who don't have multiple exposure capability in-camera, it is easy to create the same effect in Photoshop. Simply expose the images to be used at an average meter reading and bring the images into Photoshop. Using Adobe Camera Raw works well as you can open all images, apply the proper white balance and send the set to Photoshop to be assembled. In Photoshop



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Eastern Sierra



Tree Multiple - The Palouse

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stack one exposure on top of the next. This can be done by holding down the Shift key while using the Move tool to drag the images on top of each other. Once you have your layer stack you'll need to change the opacity for each layer. The formula is 1 over the layer number. For example, the bottom layer is 1/1 or 100%, layer 2, (on top of layer one) would be 1/2 or 50%, layer 3, 1/3 or 33% and so on. As you reach the last image in your layer stack the multiple effect will magically appear! You might want to add a curves layer in the stack to adjust the contrast but this is optional and depends on the image. Next flatten your image, and then use your normal workflow to finish the image.

Image Overlay

Like multiple exposures, Nikon cameras have this capability in-camera. For others, you will need to assemble yours in Photoshop.

Image Overlay allows you to choose two images from the card in your camera and overlay one on top of the other while still having control of the opacity of each image. The image below was created by shooting one sharp frame at f/16 and the next frame out-of-focus at f/2.8. For this technique, which resembles the Orton or slide

sandwich from the old film days, you will want to defocus or make the image visually grow larger in the viewfinder. When making these out of focus images, remember that a longer focal length lens (200mm or so) will make it easier to throw it out of focus. The key is to experiment with varying degrees of de-focused images. The images were then combined together in camera using the image overlay capability.

For those who don't have this capability in-camera this technique can be accomplished by shooting the same images as described above, and then overlaying them in Photoshop. To start, open your images in Photoshop. Then using your Move Tool while holding down the Shift key, drag the out-of-focus image on top of the sharp image or vice-versa. Each will render a slightly different effect. Now experiment with the blend modes of Overlay, Soft Light or Multiply and then finish with your standard Photoshop workflow. Image #1 below is the "straight" shot and image #2 is the Overlay shot done in-camera. Note the soft dreamy effect created by this technique.

Now, armed with these creative techniques go out and make images that express the feelings that Freeman Patterson speaks of and have fun! ■



Zimmerman Farm #1



Zimmerman Farm #2