



Three views of a Peace Rose

Thinking Creatively

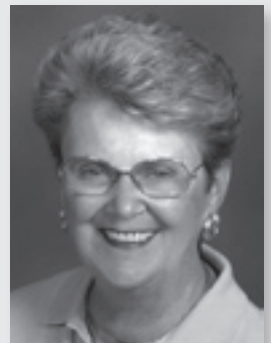
Creativity can be defined as the use of the imagination or original ideas, especially in the production of artistic work. Most members of the Photographic Society of America (PSA) have had an occasion to view a photographer's creative image and wondered, "How on earth did she think of that? And, "How come I never think like that?" The creative process is a thought process that one can learn and the more one thinks creatively, the more one sees reality in a creative way.

A second question, less frequently heard, about creative images might be "Why did he do that?" Why make all of that effort in-camera or in the digital darkroom? The answer is easy: there is a certain joy in making an image completely your own. From inception to completion, it is just downright FUN! To conceive an idea in your head, perhaps jot it down on paper and then carry it through to completion, gives one an immeasurable degree of satisfaction and happiness. You enter the creative process for yourself: not for a judge; not for an audience, but for yourself!

The Photographic Society of America defines creative photography as the use of *altered reality* in an image. The PSA Exhibition Standards require that the *photographic content* of the image must predominate. The use of altered reality is permitted in all divisions of PSA with the exception of Nature, Photo Travel and Photojournalism, where the truth is paramount. Creative photography is especially encouraged in the *Electronic Imaging (EID)* and *Color Projected Image Divisions (CPID)*, with both offering creative study groups and competitions.

The first prerequisite to thinking creatively is the desire to think imaginatively and a good place to start that process is by noticing creative images in magazines, cartoons, TV and movies. The photographers, cinematographers and graphic artists that generate many of these images are highly paid original thinkers. If learning to play tennis, isn't it a good idea to watch the best players in the world and study their form and techniques? Creativity is no different. By *really* observing

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Lizzie



Chasing the leader



Iris

ingenious images in the media, you can stimulate your own creative juices. The mind can be encouraged to think creatively.

Another way to fuel the imagination is by observing other photographer's creative images. Using the Internet, one can view pictures of various PSA-recognized exhibitions, which have creative theme sections and post winners online. It is inspiring to note the uses other members have made of *altered reality* and how you can apply ideas to your own photographs.

Becoming a creative photographer can be accomplished in-camera or through the use of the digital darkroom. There are several articles each year in the *PSA Journal* devoted to in-camera creativity. Look in the *Journal Index* and read past articles and learn how to utilize the camera for creativity. <http://www.psaphoto.org/mem/template.htm>

Two articles available are: *The Art Hidden in Flowers*; **Fabiola del Alcazar-Forns**, July 2007, pp. 20-23, which is an excellent how-to on in-camera techniques. Or *Symphony of Light*; **Tatiana Slepukhin-Zamachnaia**, July 2008, pp. 26-30, which describes another creative technique. If new to PSA and you do not have older copies of the *Journal*, most articles are available by doing an Internet search, using the author's name and title of the article.

For learning in the digital darkroom, the possibilities are endless. Join a CPID or EID study group with a creative theme and learn from your fellow group members. The PSA Web site for CPID study groups' states, *The primary purpose of each group is to expand the knowledge and improve the skills of its members through mutual assistance and support.* The EID study groups are open to the public for viewing. Go to



Ghost Hill

<http://www.psaphoto.org/> where presently one can find thirty-six study groups. Groups 11, 18, 20, 21, 24 and 34 are creative groups where the images can be viewed along with an explanation of how the image was generated.

Go on-line and do a Google search for *Photoshop Creative Photography* and you will receive pages of sites; some free and some paid for tutorials. If you are a member of the National Association of Photoshop Professionals, hundreds of Photoshop creative tutorials are available to you either in text or video format. (<http://www.photoshouser.com/>).

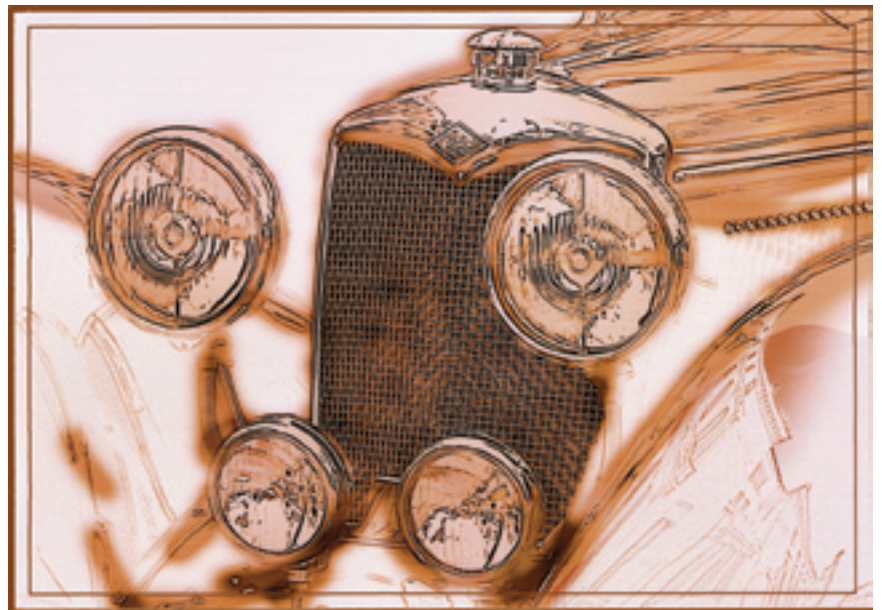
By working hard at motivating the imagination, a person can be inspired to produce a creative image. A word of caution: using various methods of altered reality will not turn a bad picture into an instant winner. Before attempting any work in the digital darkroom, make sure to utilize an image which is technically sound. Good composition, good lighting, and all of the other practices, which go into making a good photograph, must be employed. Do not waste time working on a picture that is technically flawed.

Stimulate your own mind into thinking creatively. Learn creative techniques in-camera and in the digital darkroom, so that next time the question is asked, "How on earth did she think of that?" the question may be referring to your creative image.

Whatever lies in the future for us, one thing will probably remain: Expression by the Arts. It has always been and will always be available to those wishing to go one notch further in their creative quest and to seek their true identity, one picture at a time and in the true creative spirit." **Denis Gionet, Photo Artist** ■

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